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The Fallen Woman and the British Empire in Victorian Literature and Culture

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THE FALLEN WOMAN AND THE BRITISH EMPIRE
IN VICTORIAN LITERATURE AND CULTURE

by

ELLEN J. STOCKSTILL

Under the Direction of LeeAnne Richardson, PhD

ABSTRACT

This dissertation focuses on the triangulated relationship among female sexuality, patriarchy, and empire and examines literary and historical texts to understand how Britons increasingly identified as imperialists over the course of the nineteenth century. This project, the first book-length study of its kind, features analyses of canonical works like *Mansfield Park*, *David Copperfield*, and *Adam Bede* as well as analyses of paintings, etchings, conference proceedings, newspaper advertisements, colonial reports, political tracts, and medical records from Britain and its colonies. I challenge critical conceptions of the fallen woman as a trope of domestic fiction whose position as outcast illustrates the stigmatization of female sex during the nineteenth century, and I argue that the depiction and punishment of fallen women in multiple genres reveal an interest in protecting and maintaining an imperial system that claims moral

superiority over the people it colonizes. My critical stance is both feminist and postcolonial, and my work complicates readings of fallen women in Victorian literature while also adding significantly to scholarship on gender and empire begun by Anne McClintock and Philippa Levine. I claim that during the nineteenth century, the fallen woman comes to represent that which will threaten patriarchal and imperial power, and her regulation reveals an intent to purify the British conscience and strengthen the nation's sense of itself as a moral and exceptional leader in the world. My investigation into fallenness and empire through a wide range of texts underscores the centrality of imperialism to British society and to the lives of Britons living far removed from colonial sites like India or East Africa.

INDEX WORDS: Victorian Literature, British Imperialism, Imperial Literature, Fallen Women, Female Sexuality, Gender Studies, Jane Austen, Charles Dickens, George Eliot, Sarah Grand, William Booth, Rudyard Kipling

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A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

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Georgia State University

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IN VICTORIAN LITERATURE AND CULTURE

by

ELLEN J. STOCKSTILL

Committee Chair: LeeAnne Richardson

Committee: Paul Schmidt

Randy Malamud

Electronic Version Approved:

Office of Graduate Studies

College of Arts and Sciences

Georgia State University

May 2015

DEDICATION

For Drew—in gratitude of your unwavering love and support.

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1 INTRODUCTION

The sentiment of empire may be called innate in every Briton. If there are exceptions, they are like those of men born blind or lame among us. It is part of our patrimony: born with our birth, dying only with our death; incorporating itself in the first elements of our knowledge, and interwoven with all our habits of mental action upon public affairs.

W.E. Gladstone, *England's Mission*, 1878

This dissertation aims to reveal the ways Britons in the nineteenth century came to see themselves as imperialists. While at first glance it might not seem that the identity formation of people who lived over one hundred years ago would have much bearing on the world we inhabit today, understanding this past, in fact, has great importance in a new era of global dominance. The United States' sense of exceptionalism and military, economic, and cultural power certainly share characteristics with Britain's global supremacy in the Victorian period, and understanding how the Britons saw themselves and their duty to the larger world can help explain or, at least, provide context for how today's global powers interact, seek to exert influence, and protect their interests.

Many historical studies of the British Empire have provided an overview of how this world power developed and some have looked at the role of women in the Empire's geographical expansion and in the formation and preservation of imperial identity. My dissertation seeks to remedy a gap in scholarship by focusing on a particular group of women whose experiences intersect with imperial expansion in fascinating ways in both historical and literary texts. These women, described during the period as "fallen" because of their sexual behavior, are the recipients of disciplinary action meant to purify the British conscience and strengthen the

country's sense of itself as a moral leader in the world. This project incorporates primary material, historical studies, literary criticism, and critical theory in order to better understand the formation of British imperial identity, and it shows that empire building was not just a man's game but a complex discursive process in which fallen women played a vital, though unrecognized, role. I build upon scholarship that highlights how British identity formed in relation to the Other, and I establish that while colonized subjects occupied that status in the nineteenth century, outsiders within Britain's borders, like fallen women, also contributed to imperial identity formation.

In order to understand the role of fallen women in empire building, this dissertation takes the form of a literary history so that the imperial and cultural history of the British Empire can be examined side by side. This approach assumes the interdependence of these histories, and I follow the lead of postcolonial critics like Edward Said and Patrick Brantlinger who see culture and imperialism as inseparable and part of the broader discourse of the period that engages parts of people's everyday lives.

1.1 British Identity, Narrative, and Imperialism

I ground this study in the work of historians who have traced the development of a nationalist British identity and postcolonial critics who see the novel as a key narrative force in imperialism and emphasize the visibility of imperial culture. In *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837* (2012), Linda Colley writes that the formation of British identity was a complex and non-linear process—one that did not overthrow “other loyalties” or blend Celtic cultures but one in which “Britishness was superimposed over an array of internal differences in response to contact with the Other, and above all in response to conflict with the Other” (6). Colley, along with other scholars, then, sees identity formation as relational. As she outlines in her historical

study, the relational Other was France during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries as the wars with France pushed Britons to define themselves in contrast with those whom they fought bitterly. She writes,

Some of these internal disparities [between England, Scotland, and Wales] would be smoothed out as this period progressed, by the advance in road and postal communications, by the proliferation of print, and by the operation of free trade throughout the island. But it was not primarily this limited process of cultural integration that made possible an emerging sense of Britishness. Instead, men and women came to define themselves as Britons—in addition to defining themselves in many other ways—because circumstances impressed them with the belief that they were different from those beyond their shores, and in particular different from their prime enemy, the French. Not so much consensus or homogeneity or centralization at home, as a strong sense of dissimilarity from those without proved to be the essential cement. (17)

The dominance of Protestantism in Britain and efforts to protect its dominance, for example, can be seen as a crucial ideological stance against Catholic France. War and religion, here, went hand in hand not only because religious disputes were at the heart of many military conflicts, but also because religion, like wars against the Other, acted as a unifying force. Furthermore, military victories, particularly at Waterloo, helped reinforce a sense of ordination or calling by God. The nation's Protestant identity continued to influence a sense of British exceptionalism throughout the Victorian period especially as the civilizing mission melded with the imperial project later in the century.

The nature of Britain's competition with France shifted after the Battle of Waterloo as military conflicts with France ceased and Britain's imperial holdings increased across the globe. The two nations continued to compete, of course, for territories and economic influence, but France for most of the nineteenth century, was behind the British Empire in "system, profit, extent" (Said 77). Accordingly, the foremost role of Other shifted from Britain's European neighbor to indigenous peoples in Britain's colonies.

Edward Said sees the articulation of this shift in the narratives of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. He writes that "stories are at the heart of what explorers and novelists say about strange regions of the world" and that the conflict "in imperialism is over land, of course; but when it came to who owned the land, who had the right to settle and work on it, who kept it going, who won it back, and who now plans its future—these issues were reflected, contested, and even for a time decided in narrative" (xiii). In addition, Said claims that "culture comes to be associated, often aggressively, with the nation or the state; this differentiates 'us' from 'them,' almost always with some degree of xenophobia. Culture in this sense is a source of identity, and a rather combative one at that" (xiii). Here Said echoes Colley's claim about the role of the Other in forming British identity, but he privileges the role of narrative, specifically the novel, in this process. He does not argue that the novel "'caused' imperialism" but that "imperialism and the novel fortified each other" (71). Elleke Boehmer describes it this way:

The Empire in its heyday was conceived and maintained in an array of writings—political treatises, diaries, acts and edicts, administrative records and gazetteers, missionaries' reports, notebooks, memoirs, popular verse, government briefs, letters 'home' and letters back to settlers. The triple-decker novel and the best-

selling adventure tale, both definitive Victorian genres, were infused with imperial ideas of race pride and national prowess. (14)

Over time these texts, from the economic to the entertaining, helped consolidate a vision of England as superior and worthy to rule.¹ Because narratives played such a central role in the dissemination of imperial ideology, studies of the British Empire must take into consideration an array of narratives to understand the pervasive nature of imperial discourse or should examine texts previously overlooked in conjunction with imperialism. *Culture and Imperialism* has pushed many students and scholars to read the novel this way since “a cursory examination of the Victorian novel suggests how curiously invisible and yet ubiquitous were the imperial representations that contributed to the national culture’s understanding of itself” (Boehmer 23). From this perspective, the novel throughout its history helped Britons understand “out there” and “right here,” and both visions were integral to the empire’s growth and stability.

Colley and Said offer compelling readings of the role of the Other and the novel in forming British identity, but their analyses fail to look inside Britain’s borders for those who are Othered at home and how their outsider status could have contributed to British identity formation. Their positions, in fact, demand an examination of this sort since their work

¹ We still see this at work today. The United States’ global dominance is certainly backed by its extraordinary economic and military power, but it is also fortified by cultural products created for internal and international consumption. For further discussion of neocolonialism and the United States, see MacDonald, Maier, and Porter.

² For criticism of feminist scholarship that fails to acknowledge the “heterogeneity of [third world] subject(s) in question” and thus participates in colonial suppression, see Mohanty.

³ See Boulukos, Ellis, Ferguson, Fraiman, and Wiltshire.

⁴ This understanding of empire is not a product of Mrs. Price’s class because the wealthy Sir

underscores so clearly the important role of the outsider in establishing hegemonic ideology. I hope to show that while foreign outsiders pushed imperial identity formation, ostracized citizens like fallen women inside Britain's borders and their depiction in narrative contributed to this formation in a similar way. The British Empire, after all, was not built through outward exploration and domination alone. We know, in fact, that the early stages of British colonialism were internal as England worked strategically to control Wales, Scotland, and Ireland and "which by the nineteenth century saw all these regions directly ruled from the Westminster parliament" (Philippa Levine 1). Maintenance of the Empire, from start to finish, required diligence at home and abroad in both the public and private spheres of Britons' lives and, as I will show, relied upon the regulation of deviant female sexuality.

1.2 Deviant Female Sexuality, Patriarchy, and Empire

Gender and sexuality were not separated from the causes of Empire; rather, their regulation was part of it from the beginning. In *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Context*, Anne McClintock describes how "women served as the boundary markers of imperialism, the ambiguous mediators of what appeared to be—at least superficially—the predominantly male agon of empire" (24). The depictions of unknown land as feminine in early colonial texts, McClintock argues, reveal "a strategy of violent containment" in gendered terms (24). She calls this a "ritualistic moment in imperial discourse, as male intruders ward off fear of narcissistic disorder by reinscribing, as natural, an excess of gender hierarchy" (24).

European colonialism fashioned unknown lands as conquered, feminized, demarcated, and contained in narratives, but imperial power also required literal regulation of sex and sexuality. This is not surprising since Britain's system of primogeniture protected male power at

home. One would then expect that policies abroad would similarly construct limitations on sex, marriage, and property. Under primogeniture, a woman's value was tied intrinsically to property and that relationship needed protection in order to ensure legitimate family lineage and inheritance rights. Gender, sexuality, and property, under this system, existed in an interdependent relationship: "A man can be sure that his name and his estates will be passed on to those of his own blood only if he has absolute possession of a woman's body. Adultery or premarital pregnancy might confuse the issue, in the legal sense of the word" (Mitchell xi). Ownership of land, then, depended upon the regulation of the female body, specifically her sexual relationships and resulting pregnancies.

In a colonial context, we see this system of interdependency reinforced. I would argue that the reinforcement of this system becomes excessive in the colonial context since the ownership of property immediately gets called into question because the imperialist takes the land from native inhabitants. In this sense, patriarchal concepts and language get utilized in the imperial enterprise even when women are not physically present. Because the maintenance of imperial power required regulation of land and sexual relationships, the discourse of empire echoes the discourse of patriarchy, and, consequently, imperial ideology is never far from gender politics.

This is not to say that imperialism looked the same all over the globe. The British Empire was incredibly diverse in terms of geography, culture, and administration since there "was no lone formula for rule or for take-over and, much like the Empire of the eighteenth century, there was perpetual debate about both the moral standing of colonialism and about the value of particular colonies" (Philippa Levine 92). What I do mean to say is that patriarchy provided a common dictionary or understanding of power relationships that served many

different purposes across the disparate reaches of the empire. Even at the empire's furthest distance from women and women's issues, the imperial ideology propping up the resident power structure still connected to gender politics.

1.3 Fallenness and Imperial Identity Formation

Where does this lead us when thinking about fallen women and the development of imperial identity? I have argued that imperial identity formation relies upon contact and conflict with the Other, that this struggle was recorded in narrative, and that imperialism as a political system was never far removed from gender politics. From here, I will show that the fallen woman fits into this schema in a way that emphasizes the interconnectedness of deviant female sexuality, patriarchy, and empire and traces the genealogy of imperial identity over the course of the nineteenth century.

In this dissertation, I look at the ways in which “tropes, signs, codes, discourses, plots and myths” about the fallen woman shaped British imperial identity over the course of the Victorian period (MacDonald 19). I focus on this figure for a number of reasons. To begin, one could argue that she is the most frequently “othered” character in Victorian literature. Readers have often wondered at her prevalence in major works of the period, and various critics have offered possible reasons as to her popularity in fiction, poetry, and fine art. The prevailing wisdom has been that the fallen woman was categorized and disciplined by a hegemonic middle-class ideology that preferred a social structure shaped by separate spheres and that limited women's sexual choices. While middle-class values surely played a primary role in defining fallenness in Victorian culture, this prevailing wisdom ignores the imperial ethic present in hegemonic middle-class ideology. My guiding question is this: If nationalistic and imperial duty became integrated into middle-class ideology and identity over the course of the nineteenth century, how

did that shift affect women whose sexual behavior defied the bourgeois ideal? In addition, since identity formation frequently occurs through a process of defining “us” and “them,” how did the fallen woman’s categorization as outsider (fallen, punished, and marginalized) contribute to the development of insider identity (pure, triumphant, and dominant)? Furthermore, how did this categorization become an “energizing myth” of the British Empire? (Green 3). To answer these questions, I explore the triangulated relationship between deviant female sexuality, patriarchy, and empire during the nineteenth century in literary and historical texts that feature fallen women, and I trace the ways this relationship changes and stays the same over time.

The fallen woman’s Otherness helps to define middle-class standards while she also threatens them. In *Tainted Souls and Painted Faces: The Rhetoric of Fallenness in Victorian Culture*, Amanda Anderson contends that fallenness inherently challenges identity cohesion. She does not focus on the fallen woman as key to understanding Victorian sexuality; instead, Anderson sees the fallen woman as key to understanding conceptions of selfhood. For her, stories of fallenness are embodiments of philosophical struggle. In other words, the fallen woman does not appear again and again because Victorians were obsessed with tight morality codes but because Victorians were greatly concerned about how each person relates to and is shaped by the world in which he or she lives.

Anderson does not discuss the fallen woman’s connections to the British Empire, but her overall argument helps support my ideas. Early in her book, she claims that

the shadowy and marginal appearances of the fallen, in both literary and non-literary texts, frequently serve less as moral exempla of vice than as uneasy reminders of more general cultural anxieties about the very possibility of deliberative moral action: to ‘fall’ is, after all, to lose control. Mechanization,

degrading urban environments, social determination, laws of causation, commodification, the disruptions of desire, the constraints of cultural forms and narratives—these are the forces that, singly or jointly, lurk behind portrayals of the sexually stigmatized. (2)

While Anderson does not specify imperialism as one of these cultural anxieties, its need for controlled moral backing makes clear how fallenness can challenge imperial ideology. When colonialism shifted over the course of the nineteenth century from a slave-driven economic endeavor to a civilizing mission and ethical burden of “the White Man,” the venture required moral grounding in order to legitimize itself. As Anderson outlines, this kind of backing falls flat if “the possibility of deliberative moral action” is found to be false or, even, wavering. The chapters that follow demonstrate how the stigmatization of fallen women served to prop up hope in moral action and that these punishments helped reinforce a sense of control at home and abroad.

1.4 Focus and Structure of Study

My literary analysis of fallen women and the British Empire primarily focuses on the novel, and I do this for a number of reasons. First, the novel’s “slow and steady structure of attitude and reference” aptly describes how this cultural artifact fits into imperial discourse, and it will aid me in my analysis of realist fiction from the early nineteenth century—fiction that on the surface does not seem to have overt imperial connections but that communicates a broader understanding of the privilege and morality underpinning imperial ideology (Said 74-75). Second, the novel’s association with the middle class in general and to women in particular deserves critical attention since I am concerned with a venerated middle-class identity and the fallen woman’s role in its development. George Levine describes the relationship this way:

The Victorian novel built itself...most fundamentally on its preoccupation with domesticity, where the lives of women became central and where women, thus gathered particular authority in the writing. Domestic realism spoke to the condition of its middle-class readers. The novel and the burgeoning middle class were, in Victorian England, deeply identified with each other, to the extent that many modern critics have viewed the Victorian novel as a kind of instruction book for the middle class. (12)

Consequently, an examination of how empire, patriarchy, and deviant female sexuality intersect in nineteenth-century novels will be crucial in understanding how imperial objectives infiltrated middle-class life. Furthermore, the Victorian novel is worthy of close scrutiny since its rise to power mimics, to a degree, Britain's rise to global dominance, suggesting that any study of the power structure of the British Empire should explore how the novel played a part.

While the novel's importance to the middle class is clear, I do not rely on it solely to make my argument. I also examine texts from various genres because I want to understand better the broader imperial discourse of the nineteenth century as it "represents the metaphorical system through which the individual gains identity, and through which he or she relates to the institution which holds power" (MacDonald 233). Thus, I analyze novels and poems about fallen women, but I also consider social reform writing, historical documents, and other popular material of the time. While I show how literature both perpetuated and challenged British imperial identity, in order to demonstrate its role fully, I reveal how Victorian literature fit into and connected with other voices in the nineteenth century.

One final but important note on the focus of this dissertation: I primarily examine how the British understood themselves and their roles in the broader empire. This means that my

analysis, at times, ignores the stories of the native peoples with whom the British engaged overseas. I do not do this in order to silence those on the margins; rather, my critical distance comes from that fact that I am interested in the ways in which those seemingly far removed from the outposts of empire actually played a role in its development or conservation. I try to acknowledge the crucial moments of disconnect between the homeland and the colony, but my goal is to show how Britons saw themselves and understood their interactions with people of other cultures. Thus, I focus on the British perspective of imperialism, but I note where this perspective reflects a biased or racist stance. I hope that by doing this I create a bridge between imperial historiography and postcolonial criticism in that I examine the perspective of those in power while acknowledging the damages of their policies, and I describe a nineteenth-century-Eurocentric point of view that frequently homogenizes colonized peoples without participating in that kind of suppression myself as a scholar.² Jane Haggis skillfully describes this dilemma in feminist postcolonial criticism:

Centring a singular female subjectivity fosters an inability to deal with the power relations of colonialism, privileging the White Woman as benevolent victim of the imperialist White Man. The colonised are relegated to an ungendered background against which the white genders act out their historical roles. Race, class and the asymmetry of colonial domination cannot be addressed without risking the fragmentation of the subject “woman”.... Focusing on gender to the exclusion of race or class does little to capture the nature of relations between women across

² For criticism of feminist scholarship that fails to acknowledge the “heterogeneity of [third world] subject(s) in question” and thus participates in colonial suppression, see Mohanty.

the colonial divide, while white women's own historical agency is limited by her all-encompassing status as patriarchal victim. (164)

In order to avoid this kind of oversimplification, I am as detailed as possible in my descriptions of gender relations in Britain and in various colonies, and I do not force them into binary relationships when their connections are “uneasy and unequal” (Haggis 166). Furthermore, I call attention to descriptions of women that assume homogeneity, and I note when that expression of homogeneity distorts reality and reveals racial bias.

This dissertation moves chronologically in order to trace the development of an identity. To some readers, this may seem to force linearity on works of art that were not conceived as such. My purpose, however, is not to map British identity onto an ascending line towards the “scramble for Africa” at the end of the nineteenth century. Rather, my goal is to understand more deeply how imperialism was adopted into British identity and the role that fallen women played in that process. I have chosen to highlight moments when that adoption or naturalization becomes clear in Victorian discourse. Although the formation of imperial identity is a complex discursive and relational process, and so not in the strictest sense “linear,” the expansion of the British Empire during the nineteenth century (the addition of 10 million square miles and 400 million people), the protection of its power, and gradual loss of it through resistance movements does show a rise and fall, so I see a historically-based study as valuable (Levine 92).

I limit myself in this dissertation to works composed during the nineteenth century. Of course, any kind of historically organized study is inherently problematic as its parameters are inescapably arbitrary. Wherever I begin or end this study, I will certainly ignore relevant texts coming before and after this period. Discussion of empire did not begin in the Victorian period nor did the Victorians “invent” the fallen woman; she graces many pages of literature and history

long before the nineteenth century. Nevertheless, this historical limitation is necessary. While the fallen woman is not unique to Victorian literature alone, her *prevalence* in Victorian literature is exceptional. As George Watt notes in his monograph on this character, “Dickens, Eliot, Gaskell, Collins, Gissing, Moore and Hardy each have, in at least one major work, questioned the absolute nature of the two groups of women—the pure and the fallen” (7). Barrett Browning, Tennyson, both Rossettis, and Meredith also took on the subject of female sexual purity in their poetry. The fallen woman’s visibility in nineteenth-century literature, then, is unquestionable, but in this dissertation, I want to show how her visibility discloses and impacts the “curiously invisible and yet ubiquitous” empire in Victorian discourse (Boehmer 23).

The first chapter of this dissertation features an analysis of Jane Austen’s *Mansfield Park* and establishes a key paradigm of the work that later chapters will build upon: namely, the female body as principal site of reform in imperial ideology. Although Austen’s novel is not an archetypal fallen woman text in which the ostracized woman falls deeper into vice and ultimately death, *Mansfield Park*, as an early nineteenth-century work, shows how sexual deviancy came to be understood as a key threat to domestic tranquility and reveals, in part, how the fallen woman’s body came to bear the burden of society’s judgment.

In the second chapter, I examine two canonical works by Charles Dickens and George Eliot: *David Copperfield* and *Adam Bede*. Each of these realist novels features a fallen woman who ultimately leaves England, and I argue that British imperial power makes the exits of these women possible and acts to produce normative behavior in men and women. In my theoretical structure of triangulation, the departures of these women restore a societal balance. Remaining in England, they threaten patriarchal society; heading to a colony, they allow the male heroes of these texts to enter into normative relationships that uphold patriarchal values.

The third chapter provides further investigation into fallen women as threatening figures. In this section, I analyze the competing narratives surrounding fallen women during the passage and enforcement of the Contagious Diseases Acts, and I highlight the irony of Britain's attempts to fashion itself as a morally superior nation while sanctioning illicit sexual acts. One narrative about the fallen woman claims that she is a harbinger of disease and degradation who threatens to weaken Britain's imperial might, while the other claims that she is a seduced and betrayed victim of hypocritical men who is treated unjustly by the law. I trace these narratives in works of prose and fiction, and I show how the female body became a point of contention not only in domestic gender politics but also in the maintenance of imperial power.

My final chapter presents William Booth's *In Darkest England and the Way Out* and Rudyard Kipling's *The Light that Failed* as key texts that illustrate the consolidation of imperial ideology at the end of the nineteenth century. I argue that their depictions of fallen women collapse boundaries between categories of women in order to legitimize imperial action and ideology. In the case of Booth, he compares the fallen woman of London with the devilish negress of the African wilderness, and I claim that he does this in order to pull on his audience's preconceived notions about the worth of the civilizing mission. He hopes that his British readers believe that they have a unique ability and duty to reform and civilize degenerate subjects and that they will apply that imperial approach to social problems, like fallenness, inside England's borders. In the case of Kipling, his novel depicts an artist who seeks to exert control over a seemingly unconquerable New Woman by condensing his vision of her with the body of a fallen woman in a painting he considers his masterpiece. His consolidation of these figures is an attempt to contain this woman who repeatedly refused his advances and advice; the painting's

destruction and the lack of control it symbolizes pushes him to reenter a place where he can exert influence: the colonial battlefield.

These chapters work together to challenge critical conceptions of the fallen woman as simply a trope of domestic fiction whose position as outcast illustrates the stigmatization of female sex during the nineteenth century. Therefore, this project aims to expand our understanding of the fallen woman's role in Victorian literature and culture by highlighting how the depiction and punishment of fallen women in multiple genres reveal an interest in protecting and maintaining an imperial system that claims moral superiority over the people it colonizes.

2 THE OTHER AND THE FALLEN IN JANE AUSTEN'S *MANSFIELD PARK*

[Mrs. Bertram's] two daughters come to grief—to the worst grief known to Miss Austen's universe, far worse than the Napoleonic wars.

E. M. Forster, "Flat and Round Characters"

While I could have selected a number of novels from the early nineteenth century with which to begin, I have selected Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park* (1814) because it effectively introduces the themes of this dissertation. It brings together deviant female sexuality, patriarchy, and empire in a domestic setting and exhibits their interdependency in a way that I will trace through other texts of the Victorian period. The novel models how these three threads intersect, although, as I show over this and the next three chapters, the presentation, emphasis, and context of these threads shift over the course of the nineteenth century. Austen's novel is not the "classic" fallen woman tale in that there is not one character who falls and receives punishment. Rather, *Mansfield Park* presents multiple characters who struggle to make ethical choices in terms of sex and marriage and whose actions carry varying consequences.

Austen's distance from imperial concerns (challenged by Edward Said and others after him) also makes *Mansfield Park* rich ground with which to begin this study. One benefit of a chronological investigation is the ability to see how a particular subject gets treated over the course of many years. In this dissertation, I trace how the presence of the British Empire and fallen women in literary texts changes generally and in relation to each other during the nineteenth century. I draw particular attention to moments when the fallen woman becomes more prevalent in Victorian fiction at the height of realist expression in the mid-nineteenth century and when the empire becomes more explicitly woven into fiction at the end of the period. Beginning with *Mansfield Park*, then, I explore how a text in which the Empire is made nearly invisible still reveals its interdependent relationship with patriarchy and deviant female sexuality.

Mansfield Park is unique in Austen's canon for a number of reasons. First, for casual readers of Austen, the novel is rarely a favorite and the text has not been countlessly re-imagined the way that *Pride and Prejudice* has (e.g. *Bridget Jones's Diary* (1996), *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* (2009), *Death Comes to Pemberley* (2011), *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries* (2012), and many others), but Edward Said's influential reading of the novel in *Culture and Imperialism* has made *Mansfield Park* as popular as her "better-loved" novels among literary scholars. Second, while working on *Mansfield Park*, Austen knew for the first time that she would have an eager and "sizeable" audience (Stabler vi). *Sense and Sensibility* and *Pride and Prejudice* were published several years after they were written, and the success of these two novels in 1811 and 1813 set the stage for Austen to have an established audience for *Mansfield Park*. Austen's sense of audience with this novel, then, differs significantly from her earlier publications. Finally, the novel sticks out in Austen's canon because of the way it connects seemingly

disparate spaces: Fanny's surrogate home in England is integrally tied to a plantation in Antigua, the ports of the royal navy contain Fanny Price's precious cargo (her brother), and London's high society features the morally fallible Maria Rushworth and Henry Crawford.

One could argue that *Mansfield Park* is a novel about the moral individual's relation to his or her space. The novel's title, of course, makes this clear as Austen underscores the geographical focus of the text rather than the attitudes of its characters, as she does with *Pride and Prejudice* and *Sense and Sensibility*. We see the influence of space on a character's actions and feelings when Maria Bertram visits the property that will become hers upon marrying Mr. Rushworth: "When they came within the influence of Sotherton associations, it was better for Miss Bertram, who might be said to have two strings to her bow. She had Rushworth-feelings, and Crawford-feelings, and in the vicinity of Sotherton, the former had considerable effect. Mr. Rushworth's consequence was hers" (Austen 65). Here, the property has enough power to sway Maria's allegiance. At a distance from Henry, Maria can imagine herself doing well at Sotherton as the wife of the rather dull Rushworth. Her allegiance, of course, shifts later on when Maria leaves her husband's company and property and stays with friends for Easter in Twickenham. Henry, similarly removed from the disciplining atmosphere of Mansfield Park or Portsmouth, meets her there, and they rekindle their relationship (353). In both of these instances, Austen suggests that a person's environment has great influence over his or her actions. As Janet Todd explains, "In *Mansfield Park* a greater sense of the influence of place and circumstance on the insecure personality diminishes the pure delight in comic character" (75). Much of the tension in the novel comes from our concern for Fanny's insecure personality as she, uprooted from her birth home, goes to live in a place unfamiliar and frequently unfriendly to her. A key question throughout the text is whether or not Fanny can survive in this environment and whether she can

remain a constant moral force. We see this challenged again when she returns to her birth home, a very different space, and finds herself pining for the calmer Mansfield Park. At the end of the novel, Fanny takes her younger sister out of that tense environment, and we see the cycle begin again. Can this young woman thrive in an unfamiliar space? “Portsmouth,” Moira Ferguson writes, “by this account, is the uncivilized other” contrasted with the stately and seemingly morally superior Mansfield Park (122). The behavior of the Bertram daughters, of course, challenges the estate’s claim to superiority, and this tension between Fanny’s two homes implicitly illustrates the perceived moral disparities between England and her colonies.

Austen’s interest in exploring the importance of place is particularly significant in this novel featuring a patriarch who is a plantation owner in Antigua and who funds his family’s life in England through this business. While the British colony acts most clearly as an economic force that requires maintenance and Sir Thomas’s attention at various points in the text, it also acts to provide a language of reform that centers on the female body. This is a phenomenon that I trace throughout this dissertation: the female body as principal site of reform in imperial ideology. In Austen’s novel, the site of reform is Fanny Price, and I argue that Austen critiques class prejudice by showing how the Bertram family misplaces Fanny as the Other, enacting an imperial impulse to civilize and marking her body as in need of reform, while Julia and Maria Bertram, the women most in need of discipline, go on to make questionable and disastrous marital and sexual decisions. Austen’s novel ultimately shows that the Bertram family should have been more concerned with sexual deviancy than with economic status. Therefore, the novel helps establish a paradigm that will become ubiquitous in mid-nineteenth century texts in which the fallen woman’s body bears the burden of society’s judgment.

I am not the first person to draw attention to the imperial framing of *Mansfield Park* as the novel's concern with disparate spaces, particularly Antigua and England, has garnered the attention of many postcolonial critics. Sir Thomas Bertram's status as a landowner in the West Indies brings up serious questions about slavery, abolition, and race for modern-day readers, but less clear is Austen's motivation for including references to the family connection with Antigua and its slave plantations. Still more contentious for postcolonial critics is how to view Sir Thomas, his power at home and abroad, and what that says about his relationship with Fanny.

Edward Said's analysis of *Mansfield Park* in "Jane Austen and Empire" (1989) has sparked considerable debate about the role of imperialism in Austen's novel. Reprinted in *Culture and Imperialism* and situated in a broader study of the novel's part in imperial discourse, Said makes clear that *Mansfield Park* is one of many novels containing "allusions to the facts of empire," which make up "a structure of attitude and reference" (62). The structure of attitude and reference to the empire, what Foucault would call discourse, is naturalized into the text and alludes to Sir Thomas's "overseas possessions," which "give him his wealth, occasion his absences, fix his social status at home and abroad, and make possible his values, to which Fanny Price (and Austen herself) finally subscribes" (62). Said points to the integral nature of the plantation to life at Mansfield Park in order to emphasize the inseparability of the two and to show how something that we now see as an abhorrent practice (slave labor on plantations) could be naturalized into a culture, made mundane and a fact of life. In addition, Said makes clear that the benefits of imperialism were present long before authors began to speak of it more explicitly.

Other critics have focused on the novel's silence on slavery—specifically Sir Thomas's "dead silence" in response to Fanny's question about the slave trade (Austen 155). George E. Boulukos notes that this moment has enchanted postcolonial critics because of the importance of

silence and speech to theorists of the 1980s and 1990s like Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak who brought critical attention to the silencing of the subaltern (361). The silence on slavery in *Mansfield Park* has invited postcolonial critics to fill in the gap in order to break silence on the injustices of the past. Doing so not only provides historical context for Austen's novel, but it also actively resists the hegemonic ideology that silenced those perspectives in the first place. In this sense, a postcolonial reading that seeks to un-silence the slave revises what had been written-out of the narrative. Moira Ferguson, for instance, looks at the silence of Fanny and the slaves in order to draw a parallel between them:

Thus gender relations at home parallel and echo traditional relationships of power between the colonialists and colonized peoples: European women visibly signify the most egregiously and invisibly repressed of the text—African-Caribbeans themselves. They mark silent African-Caribbean rebels as well as their own disenfranchisement, class and gender victimization. (118)

Ferguson ultimately claims that Fanny is a kind of stand-in for the slaves not featured in the text. For example, she is taken away from her home and family and plopped in an unfamiliar place where she will become civilized and like a “grateful negro” (Ferguson 124).

Ferguson's reading, and others like it, see *Mansfield Park* as a space corresponding with the plantation in Antigua. Fanny, in this view, is a slave on a plantation where Sir Thomas and Mrs. Norris oversee and limit her actions, experiences, and education. Her surname, Price, gives credence to this reading as it emphasizes her status as a commodity. When Mrs. Norris first suggests to the Bertrams that they take in Fanny, she says, “What if they were among them to undertake the care of her eldest daughter, a girl now nine years old, of an age to require more attention than her poor mother could possibly give? The trouble and expense of it to them,

would be nothing compared with the benevolence of the action” (Austen 5). Here Fanny’s value is weighed in terms of her burden to her parents and siblings. Any difficulty in the transfer of the young girl would surely benefit this impoverished family in the long run. When the Bertrams agree to take in Fanny, Sir Thomas makes clear that his niece and daughters “cannot be equals. Their rank, fortune, rights, and expectations, will always be different” (9). This discussion sounds similar to those about an illegitimate child taken into the home, cared for but kept distinctly separate. For readers who see Fanny categorized as slave or illegitimate plantation child, the Bertram’s ability to take on this charge reinforces their status and power over the young girl.³

While postcolonial readings of silence, omission, and oversight are incredibly important to the field of literary studies, this interpretation of Fanny is a dangerous one if not articulated carefully. We should be cautious as twenty-first-century readers in overemphasizing the correspondence between Fanny and a plantation slave because they are not the same and to suggest their equivalency ignores the reality of the slave’s oppression and participates in a re-silencing of historical fact. After all, the plot of *Mansfield Park* centers on the choices women make regarding sex, marriage, and family—freedoms not offered to slaves, male or female. The women of Austen’s novel certainly have limited options because of the patriarchal system in which they live and must navigate carefully to thrive, but they do have the ability to make choices that were systemically denied slaves. Because of this, postcolonial critics who want to draw connections between Fanny’s experiences and those of a plantation slave must make clear that the two could not have been equal in reality—and therefore must exercise caution in equating them metaphorically. African slaves and British women were both subject to the

³ See Boulukos, Ellis, Ferguson, Fraiman, and Wiltshire.

restrictions of European patriarchy, but they were not equivalent restrictions. Nonetheless, the position of Fanny and the description of her as a commodity emphasize the connection between patriarchal and imperial discourse. Even though the positions of Fanny and a plantation slave are not literal equals, the language used to describe their status emphasize that “ready-made language of rule” patriarchy provides to imperialism (Richardson 32). Austen situates Fanny as an ostracized Other in the text in order to highlight the misplaced priorities of the Bertram family; their response to Fanny is informed by a civilizing imperial view drawn to reforming the female body, and Austen shows their actions to be foolish and misguided since Fanny proves herself time and again to be morally superior to her upper-class surrogate family.

The rants of Mrs. Norris, in particular, reveal how the family categorizes Fanny as in dire need of reform. In later chapters I discuss how the female body was often used to legitimize imperial intervention in the nineteenth century—both at home and abroad. In *Mansfield Park*, we see how characters adopt an imperial and paternal mission of civilization, an attitude of benevolence, and mark the impoverished Fanny as in need of salvation. In this scheme, Fanny becomes the Other whom the British aristocracy can step in and save. While I would not, like Ferguson, term Fanny as a “grateful negro” or slave, I would argue that Fanny is the primary Other of the text and that Austen utilizes the Bertrams’ characterization of her as such not to comment on the slave trade but to comment on the misplaced attentions of the family. Austen shows Mrs. Norris’s obsession with money and with limiting Fanny’s pleasures to be ridiculous as Mrs. Norris treats Fanny as an uncivilized young woman and encourages the rest of the family to do so because Fanny has not had the economic and education benefits that her cousins have had. The imperial lexicon of “civilizing the savage” gives Mrs. Norris language with which to demean, limit, and reform Fanny. Throughout the novel, we see that these efforts have been

misplaced since Fanny consistently proves herself to be the moral center of the text. Mrs. Norris's mistakes in this regard become especially clear at the end of *Mansfield Park* when Maria leaves her husband and runs off with Henry, Julia elopes to Scotland with John Yates, and Fanny marries Edmund and becomes further integrated into the family. Mrs. Norris's prejudice against Fanny is shown to be senseless as Fanny's full value is finally recognized by the Bertrams.

Mrs. Norris marks Fanny as Other in the first chapter of the novel. Mrs. Price, Fanny's mother who married a drunken sailor beneath her, becomes desperate for help as she is pregnant with her ninth child and is unsure that she will be able to provide for her family. She reaches out to Lady Bertram hoping that their relationship can be mended in the Price's time of need. Mrs. Price writes a letter asking "Was there any chance of [her eldest son] being hereafter useful to Sir Thomas in the concerns of his West Indian property? No situation would be beneath him—or what did Sir Thomas think of Woolwich? or how could a boy be sent out to the East?" (4). Mrs. Price's request reveals her understanding of the British Empire as an "enabling space" that can offer opportunity and even redemption for a boy who can no longer be supported at home (Brantlinger 109).⁴ The West Indies and the East offer the boy an exit from the domestic conflict

⁴ This understanding of empire is not a product of Mrs. Price's class because the wealthy Sir Thomas *also* looks abroad for help for his son. While financial destitution threatens the Price family, embarrassment, at this point, threatens the Bertrams. Early in the novel, Sir Thomas decides "to go to Antigua himself, for the better arrangement of his affairs, and he took his eldest son with him in the hope of detaching him from some bad connections at home. They left England with the probability of being nearly a twelvemonth absent" (Austen 25). Sir Thomas, then, sees the empire as a redemptive site just as Mrs. Price does. By arranging for his son to

of the family's poverty and the father's alcohol addiction. Mrs. Price's "letter was not unproductive," and "Sir Thomas sent friendly advice and professions, Lady Bertram dispatched money and baby-linen, and Mrs. Norris wrote letters" (4, 5). Fanny's aunt, however, does not stop there, thinking later "that poor Mrs. Price should be relieved from the charge and expense of one child entirely out of her great number" and suggests to Lady Bertram and Sir Thomas that they adopt the eldest Price girl (5). Mrs. Norris reflects that the "expense of it to them, [Lady Bertram and Sir Thomas], would be nothing compared with the benevolence of the action" and assures them that their adoption of the young girl will be a simple process: "Give a girl an education, and introduce her properly into the world, and ten to one but she has the means of settling well, without farther expense to any body" (5). Mrs. Norris's confident statement drips with irony, of course, since the Bertram daughters do not settle well despite their quality education and proper introduction into society.⁵

In my study, Mrs. Norris's focus on the eldest Price daughter is significant because it emphasizes how the female body in particular draws the attention of the "thoroughly benevolent" reformer (7). Mrs. Price asked for help for her boys, but her sister responds by offering

leave England, an option available because of colonial holdings, Sir Thomas hopes to mitigate the damage done by his son's "bad connections." Although they live at very different economic levels, both Mrs. Price and Sir Thomas understand the benefits of being British" (Brantlinger 44).

⁵ Austen consistently depicts Mrs. Norris as hypocritical and her opinions as ironic. For instance, after telling Sir Thomas that taking in Fanny will be simple and no trouble at all, she excuses herself from any involvement in Fanny's upbringing because of Mr. Norris's health and inability to "bear the noise of a child" (7, 8).

education and a proper introduction for her eldest daughter, whom she assumes Mrs. Price does not have the ability to raise properly. This proposal surprises Mrs. Price who has “so many fine boys,” but she “accepted the offer most thankfully” (9). Mrs. Norris’s selection of a Price daughter for reform (and which happens again at the end of the novel when the family offers to take in another daughter, Susan) illustrates another point where imperial and patriarchal ideologies intersect: the restricted status of women means that they are in greater need of assistance *and* their standing as the weaker sex means that they are more likely to be receptive to reform. Mrs. Norris, in other words, believes that the Bertrams can do much with little if they adopt a female. The Bertrams do support the Price boys in helping arrange careers and educational opportunities for them, but the family’s adoption of Fanny and later Susan underscores how the impoverished female body attracts sustained intervention. We see how benevolent actions towards the male body involve financial commitments while benevolent actions towards the female body involve financial commitments as well as moral instruction and strict observation.

Once Fanny arrives at Mansfield Park, Mrs. Norris continues to position her as Other. She does this primarily by repeatedly emphasizing to Fanny that she should be grateful for all that she has, even when what she has is significantly less than her cousins, and “A pattern of enforcing Fanny’s powerlessness continues throughout Volume one” (Folsom 87). Mrs. Norris believes that the distinctions between Fanny and her cousins are important and should be delineated consistently. For example, when reflecting on Fanny’s stupidity for not wanting to learn music or drawing, Mrs. Norris says to her niece,

To be sure, my dear, that is very stupid indeed, and shows a great want of genius and emulation. But all things considered, I do not know whether it is not as well

that it should be so, for, though you know (owing to me) your papa and mamma are so good as to bring her up with you, it is not at all necessary that she should be as accomplished as you are;—on the contrary, it is much more desirable that there should be a difference. (Austen 16)

Mrs. Norris stresses this difference again when she argues with Edmund that Fanny does not need a horse like her cousins. When Fanny does enjoy the same pleasures or outings as Julia and Maria, her aunt instructs her sternly that she ought to appreciate the family's generosity. After visiting Sotherton, she tells her, "Well, Fanny, this has been a fine day for you, upon my word!...Nothing but pleasure from beginning to end! I am sure you ought to be very much obliged to your aunt Bertram and me, for contriving to let you go" (83). When Fanny refuses to participate with her cousins in the play, Mrs. Norris critiques that too—again emphasizing Fanny's low position and categorizing her behavior as ungrateful. She tells Edmund that she will not "urge" Fanny to act in the play, but that she will "think her a very obstinate, ungrateful girl, if she does not do what her aunt and cousins wish her—very ungrateful indeed, considering who and what she is" (116).

Edmund, of course, repeatedly challenges Mrs. Norris's treatment of Fanny, but even his protectiveness of her points to Fanny's position as Other. He, too, is a benevolent reformer, wishing to mold Fanny into a more outspoken and confident member of the family. He recognizes Mrs. Norris's prejudice against her, but he also focuses on Fanny's physical weakness and often ignores her subjectivity. When Fanny refuses Henry Crawford's marriage proposal, for example, Edmund, along with Sir Thomas, believes that she will come to her senses and learn to love her suitor. Sir Thomas, during Fanny's continued denial of the proposal, goes so far as to believe "his niece's understanding" as "diseased" (289). Fanny tells Edmund why she does not

want to marry Henry, and he, “scarcely hearing her to the end,” pushes her to forget the faults Henry showed while Sir Thomas was in Antigua (274). In one of Fanny’s boldest orations on the subject, she tells Edmund

“I *should* have thought,” said Fanny, after a pause of recollection and exertion, “that every woman must have felt the possibility of a man’s not being approved, not being loved by some one of her sex, at least, let him be ever so generally agreeable. Let him have all the perfections in the world, I think it ought not to be set down as certain, that a man must be acceptable to every woman he may happen to like himself.” (277)

Edmund ignores Fanny’s claims against Henry and her frustration that men assume women will love them regardless of their flaws. In her refusal of this marriage, “Fanny has not even one ally against the powerful united forces of Henry Crawford, Sir Thomas, and Mary Crawford: not even Lady Bertram defends Fanny’s right to refuse Henry’s proposal, and Edmund’s betrayal of Fanny in urging her to accept Crawford against her feelings demonstrates how completely alone she is” (Folsom 84). While Mrs. Norris consistently marks Fanny as different wishing to keep her restricted and servile, Edmund frequently overlooks her agency believing that he knows what is best for her.

This combination of restriction and disregard has profound impacts on Fanny’s confidence and health. From her early years at Mansfield Park and on, she adopts Mrs. Norris’s lowly opinion of her:

Fanny, with all her faults of ignorance and timidity, was fixed at Mansfield Park, and learning to transfer in its favour much of her attachment to her former home, grew up there not unhappily among her cousins. There was no positive ill-nature

in Maria or Julia; and though Fanny was often mortified by their treatment of her, she thought too lowly of her own claims to feel injured by it. (Austen 16)

Her years at Mansfield Park are not unhappy but they also are not particularly pleasant since the family trains her to believe herself lower than the rest. Fanny also absorbs the family's general disregard for her agency; she tells Edmund at one point that she "can never be important to anyone" and throughout the novel is surprised when someone asks her for advice since she believes herself unworthy of giving counsel (21).

Austen builds suspense in the novel more through Fanny's inner turmoil and development than through action and plot development. Fanny's struggle centers on the tension between her timidity and her moral strength—she is firm in her convictions, but she waivers in communicating them. The novel's imperial frame plays a key role in Fanny's struggle since her feelings of inferiority arise primarily from the family's distinction of her as Other and since her moral strength gets tested when Sir Thomas leaves England to check on his plantation in Antigua. Marcia McClintock Folsom writes that "*Mansfield Park* is a novel about power relations—about domination and resistance" and that "Austen locates the power of Fanny's resistance in her inner struggles: in her conscience, in her effort to figure out what to do, in her very consciousness" (83, 85). Austen, then, uses the imperial frame of the text as a way into a young woman's internal struggle for agency, and Sir Thomas's trip to Antigua initiates one of Fanny's most difficult periods of internal turmoil.

During Sir Thomas's absence, Austen shows the family's Othering of Fanny to be misguided as the other Bertrams get swept up in flirtations and improprieties Sir Thomas would never approve. Julia and Maria's competing flirtations with Henry Crawford and his careless trifling with their feelings ultimately poses a much greater threat to stability at Mansfield Park

than Fanny's access to a horse or her ability to learn French. Said claims that the imperial connections and "the casual references to Antigua" in the novel "stand of a significance 'out there' that frames the genuinely important action *here*, but not for a great significance" (*Culture* 93). In his view, the imperial frame of *Mansfield Park* is not of "great significance" to Austen because she would not have recognized it as such. Instead, through a "very odd combination of casualness and stress, Austen reveals herself to be *assuming* (just as Fanny assumes, in both senses of the word) that importance of an empire to the situation at home" (*Culture* 89). In other words, Austen believes there to be a connection between the stability of an overseas empire and the stability of an English home. While I agree that Austen draws a connection between the stability of the two sites, Antigua and England, I see Austen's references to imperial power as indicators of misplaced attentions. The civilizing desire of Mrs. Norris to save Fanny distracts her from the silly and spoiled actions of Julia and Maria while the desire of Sir Thomas to manage his Antigua plantation draws his attention away from troubles at home.

The patriarch's absence contributes to the primary sexual conflicts of the novel as things start to go wrong while he is gone tending to his slaves and sugar fields. The Bertram children find themselves more relaxed in their father's absence, and this seems like a positive development, but things become more entangled as his absence continues. The conflicts come to a head when Tom, returned from Antigua, proposes that they all put on a play. Edmund and Fanny think a play a bad idea, but the rest of the group ignores them, and the plans for a theatrical event begin. Debates ensue over which play to perform and which parts each person will have. Edmund succumbs to temptation and eventually agrees to join the actors. He claims that he joins in order to prevent an outsider from taking part, but his desire to be near Mary Crawford in the play clearly pushes him to participate. Fanny finds herself deeply hurt and

disappointed in Edmund's hypocritical actions. While the production damages Fanny's relationship with Edmund, it also threatens the future of Maria Bertram. Maria is engaged to Mr. Rushworth, but it becomes clear over the course of their many rehearsals that Maria and Henry Crawford have feelings for each other and this comes to have disastrous results.

Sir Thomas himself worries about leaving his family for nearly a year, but the trip's "necessity...in a pecuniary light, and the hope of its utility to his son" convinces him to go (26). Antigua will be an enabling space for father and son as they seek social and financial security. The possibilities that the journey offers are so great that Sir Thomas leaves "his daughters to the direction of others at their present most interesting time of life" hoping that between Edmund and Mrs. Norris, all will go well (26). The conflicts that occur in Sir Thomas's absence are important because Fanny consistently reminds us that they would not happen if the patriarch were present. This forces us to look negatively on the father's time abroad and perhaps even the reason for his time away from England. Sir Thomas's trip to Antigua also makes it possible for the young people of Mansfield Park to reveal their true selves, even as they "act," and these revelations are what Austen really cares about. She reveals the pitiable nature of the relationship between Maria and Rushworth, a pairing constructed on the promise of economic advantage and a sense of duty. The man's wealth and a "house in town" appeals so much to Maria that this "heavy young man, with not more than common sense" suddenly appears rush worthy, worthy of quick commitment and a short engagement (30). Mrs. Norris, of course, sees no problem with this arrangement and encourages it from the start—another indication of her misguided judgment since she repeatedly critiques and restricts Fanny but encourages a loveless relationship between her beloved niece and a man of means. Maria's clear desire for wealth frustrates Edmund, as he sees Rushworth as having no merits except for his money. The marriage, nonetheless, is set to

occur upon Sir Thomas's return to England—an appropriate plan as the patriarch's return from Antigua reminds readers of the economic connection between England and the West Indies while the marriage of Maria to Rushworth forges a new economic alliance.

This advantageous financial arrangement becomes threatened when Henry Crawford comes to town and Maria faces the temptations of a new relationship. Henry, beloved by his Admiral uncle, is, by his sister's admission, "the most horrible flirt that can be imagined" (34). Without having seen him in action, Austen has already given us a judgment of this man or at least a cause for concern since we know that from here he will be introduced to three eligible young women whose patriarch happens to be out of the country for upwards of a year. His preference to extend "happiness" and delay marriage, "Heaven's *last* best gift," similarly reveals how he will threaten the women of Mansfield Park (34).

Sir Thomas's imperial duty and absence do not directly cause the illicit relationship between Maria and Henry—after all, they consummate their affair after his return—but the gap created by it in the family structure makes it more likely to occur and occasions their initial flirtations. Austen sets Henry and Sir Thomas as binaries; after the visit to Sotherton, the family receives letters from Antigua with regretful news:

The day at Sotherton, with all its imperfections, afforded the Miss Bertrams much more agreeable feelings than were derived from the letters from Antigua, which soon afterwards reached Mansfield. It was much pleasanter to think of Henry Crawford than of their father; and to think of their father in England again within a certain period, which these letters obliged them to do was a most unwelcome exercise. (84-85)

As Austen situates Henry and Sir Thomas against each other, she suggests that the patriarch's absence sets Henry's presence in motion. One interpretation of this binary relationship argues that the connection between the empire and sexuality comes through the father's absence and the danger that it invites. Thus, "feminine lawlessness" comes without the rule of the father (75). Mrs. Grant describes Sir Thomas' power as "dignified" and one that "keeps every body in their place" (127). Here the British Empire and its demands on men threaten a patriarchal structure that keeps women, and thus all of society, in their place. In this equation, the maintenance of a slave plantation creates the need for Sir Thomas to head to Antigua, and his daughters acquire wanton ways during his time away.

While this interpretation has its merits and neatly connects deviant female sexuality, patriarchy, and empire in the text, I think it misses the point or rather the purpose of its presence. Austen makes use of this sequence in order to reveal Fanny's moral character and profound inner life. Just as Austen sets off Henry and Sir Thomas from each other, she sets off Fanny from the others at Mansfield Park. She wants us to empathize with Fanny, her pain, her constancy, and her deep longing for Edmund, so she uses this frame of the plantation trip, the opening for Henry Crawford, and the conflicted Miss Bertrams to show how Fanny's identity solidifies over the course of the novel. Austen shows us how good Fanny is in comparison to the other residents of the estate and how silly the whims of Mary Crawford are in comparison to the deep wells of feeling that Fanny experiences alone in her room. Sir Thomas's trip abroad allows for Austen to move quickly into Fanny's interior life. In this sense, empire paves the way for realist fiction—fiction that values the development of the protagonist's inner life.

Furthermore, Fanny's rich inner life and resistance against temptation reveal how she has not needed the kind of moral education and civilizing that the family has offered. This becomes

especially clear when the news of Maria and Henry's relationship goes public. This fall does not occur until the end of the novel, three chapters from the close, but Austen has carefully shown how the family's choices over the course of many years have led to this event. Fanny learns about the affair between Maria and Henry through a series of written documents: first in a letter from Mary Crawford telling Fanny to ignore a "most scandalous, ill-natured rumour," then in a newspaper article detailing "a matrimonial *fracas* in the family of Mr. R. of Wimpole Street," and then in a letter from Edmund claiming "There is no end of the evil let loose upon us" (343, 345, 348). Fanny, who has been deemed the uncivilized Other throughout the text, a woman made inferior because of her poverty, reflects on this surprising event:

The event was so shocking, that there were moments even when her heart revolted from it as impossible—when she thought it could not be. A woman married only six months ago, a man professing himself devoted, even *engaged*, to another—that other her near relation—the whole family, both families connected as they were by tie upon tie, all friends, all intimate together!—it was too horrible a confusion of guilt, too gross a complication of evil, for human nature, not in a state of utter barbarism, to be capable of!—yet her judgment told her it was so. (346)

Austen has carefully prepared readers for this moment when Fanny terms this affair an action of "barbarism." Austen's narrator has shown Fanny's judgment to be accurate throughout the novel, from the *Lover's Vows* sequence to Henry's marriage proposal, and so when she claims that here is an act of uncivilized humans, we too endorse Fanny's view and again see that the family's arrangement of her as Other has been foolish. By revealing Fanny's inner turmoil, her desire to be good, and her struggle for agency up until this point, Austen has proved Fanny to be

an intelligent and strong woman despite her oppressed status. Now faced with this act of sexual deviancy, the imperial term of “barbarism” gets pointed at Maria and Henry, and Austen trusts that at this point her readers will side with Fanny’s judgment of them as such.

The placement of this fall at the end of the text does not diminish its importance; rather, it illustrates how Austen wishes to control her readers’ interpretation of the event. By the time Maria leaves her husband, Austen wants us to have witnessed Fanny’s struggle for agency and the family’s misplaced desire to control her rather than the Bertram daughters. The narrator even acknowledges the speed at which the fall arises and then disappears in the text at the beginning of Volume 3 Chapter 17: “Let other pens dwell on guilt and misery. I quit such odious subjects as soon as I can, impatient to restore every body, not greatly in fault themselves, to tolerable comfort, and to have done with all the rest” (362). The restoration of these people “not greatly in fault themselves” occurs primarily through the acknowledgement of their roles in the saga. Sir Thomas “was the longest to suffer” feeling that “he had sacrificed the right to the expedient, and been governed by motives of selfishness and worldly wisdom” (362). He also

became aware how unfavourable to the character of any young people, must be the totally opposite treatment which Maria and Julia had been always experiencing at home, where the excessive indulgence and flattery of their aunt had been continually contrasted with his own severity. He saw how ill he had judged, in expecting to counteract what was wrong in Mrs. Norris, by its reverse in himself, clearly saw that he had but increased the evil, by teaching them to repress their spirits in his presence, as to make their real disposition unknown to him, and sending them for all their indulgences to a person who had been able to

attach them only by the blindness of her affection, and the excess of her praise.

Here had been grievous mismanagement. (363)

One aspect of Mrs. Norris's "blindness," as I have made clear, was her inability to see Fanny as the niece deserving of praise. This chapter, which reads like an epilogue, highlights Sir Thomas's regrets as well as those of other characters who acted blindly or should have known better. Mr. Rushworth divorces Maria, and the narrator does not grant him much sympathy as a cuckold: Maria "had despised him, and loved another—and he had been very much aware that it was so. The indignities of stupidity, and the disappointments of selfish passion, can excite little pity" (364). Edmund, too, has to come to terms with his feelings for Miss Crawford whom he had believed to be of greater moral constitution but whose "faults" he finally realizes to be those "of principle" and "of blunted delicacy" (358). Julia also expresses humility, desires "to be forgiven," and is largely welcomed back into the family along with Yates (362).

The one character who remains unchanged by the Maria-Henry affair is Mrs. Norris who lobbies for Maria's re-entry at Mansfield Park and shows herself to be so unchanged that she continues to lash out at Fanny:

Mrs. Norris, whose attachment seemed to augment with the demerits of her niece, would have had her received at home, and countenanced by them all. Sir Thomas would not hear of it, and Mrs. Norris's anger against Fanny was so much the greater, from considering *her* residence there as the motive. She persisted in placing his scruples to *her* account, though Sir Thomas very solemnly assured her, that had there been no young woman in question, had there been no young person of either sex belonging to him, to be endangered by the society, or hurt by the

character of Mrs. Rushworth, he would never have offered so great an insult to the neighbourhood, as to expect it to notice her. (365)

Sir Thomas, now seeing things clearly, advocates for Maria's disappearance. He offers to support her financially, but "farther than *that*, he would not go. Maria had destroyed her own character, and he would not by a vain attempt to restore what never could be restored, be affording his sanction to vice, or in seeking to lessen its disgrace, be anywise accessory to introducing such misery in another man's family, as he had known himself" (365). As this is the position of the now wiser Sir Thomas, we can assume that Austen wishes us to view his judgment against Maria as just; he has made parental mistakes in the past, but now he sees clearly what needs to be done. Mrs. Norris leaves Mansfield Park to live with Maria in a "remote and private" place "where, shut up together with little society, on one side no affection, on the other, no judgment, it may be reasonably supposed that their tempers became their mutual punishment" (365). Their attachment at the end of the novel indicates the justice in Maria's punishment since readers, along with the remaining Bertrams, are ready to be rid of her. The narrator tells us that Mrs. Norris's absence "was regretted by no one at Mansfield" since she was "every where tormenting" (366). Even the sweet, forgiving Fanny, the woman whom Austen has crafted into the most trustworthy character in the text, did not shed any "tears for aunt Norris—not even when she was gone for ever" (366). Austen's happy ending thus includes the patriarch's admittance of fault, the banishment of the fallen woman along with the tormenting aunt, and the marriage of Fanny and Edmund. The primary marker of Otherness has shifted from class to fallenness as Fanny joins the family after Maria leaves it, revealing that economic status for women is more fluid than sexual purity.

3 RELEGATING SIN TO A DISTANCE: NORMATIVE MALE BEHAVIOR AND THE EMIGRATION OF FALLEN WOMEN

This chapter focuses on works of realist fiction of the mid-nineteenth century featuring fallen women who emigrate or are transported to the British colony of Australia. Here I show that empire serves as an escape route or dumping ground and that the expulsion of fallen women from England illustrates a desire to keep the heart of the British Empire pure. This chapter builds upon the previous one in that I remain focused on the triangulated relationship between female sexuality, patriarchy, and empire, but I also show that while the “whore” is sent out into the colonies and the “angel” is kept home, the disciplinary actions that these authors portray reveal how these women assist men in their normative development.

The theoretical structure I propose here is one in which the tension between female sexuality and patriarchy produces and reinforces normative behavior. When this tension becomes unbalanced because of deviant female sexuality, patriarchy, that crucial point of the triangle holding up British society, becomes threatened. This, I argue, creates a need for that third part of the triangle—the empire—to relieve that tension and restore balance. I call the relationship between female sexuality and patriarchy a productive tension because, when in balance, it produces normative behavior in men and women. The British Empire, its policies, opportunities, and ideology, helps to negotiate this tension and keep it productive.

A passage near the end of *The Mill on the Floss* aptly illustrates this relationship. Maggie Tulliver has returned from her unexpected, scandalous trip with Stephen Guest, and the narrator describes the judgment that the two face upon their return. The judgment against Stephen is mild, almost understanding: “Mr Stephen Guest had certainly not behaved well; but then, young

men were liable to those sudden infatuated attachments” (509). Public opinion of Maggie is quite different:

Why—her own brother had turned her from his door—he had seen enough, you might be sure, before he would do that. A truly respectable young man—Mr Tom Tulliver—quite likely to rise in the world! His sister’s disgrace was naturally a heavy blow to him. It was to be hoped that she would go out of the neighbourhood—to America, or anywhere—so as to purify the air of St Ogg’s from the taint of her presence—extremely dangerous to daughters there! (511)

Here, the public deems that Stephen is above much reproach, Tom has a right to shut out his sister, and Maggie should leave England in order to rid the place of her disgrace. While Stephen’s class makes him almost immune to social ostracization, the threat to patriarchy is actually the threat to Tom and his future. Stephen’s position will likely stay the same, but Tom has the chance to move up in the world, and Maggie’s presumed sin threatens to destabilize that. Public opinion, personified by Eliot as the “world’s wife,” sees exit from England a natural solution to this problem (509). Maggie would be better suited to live outside of England, the thinking goes, and Britain’s extensive empire gives her plenty of options. Readers of Eliot’s novel will remember that Maggie does not leave. She refuses this course of action and stays in St Ogg’s to right this perceived wrong, but she dies “in an embrace never to be parted” with the brother who had initially turned her away (542). This ending, however, does not undermine my reading of the tension between female sexuality, patriarchy, and empire. Whether or not Maggie emigrates, Eliot makes clear that the natural, expected, and even desired conclusion would be that Maggie leave England. Furthermore, although Maggie does not follow this prescribed path,

her death insures her exit from St Ogg's society, and the deaths of Maggie and Tom obviate her risk to his future.

In *David Copperfield* and *Adam Bede*, the novels I analyze here, the fallen women *do leave* England, and their departures restore a societal balance. Since these novels center on their male heroes, the influence of the fallen woman in the texts shows how deviant female sexuality threatens patriarchal society and affects normative male behavior. My discussion of these works thus focuses as much on the heroic men as the fallen women because I am interested in the tension between them.

3.1 Realism, Assimilation, and the Fallen Woman

Realist novels of the mid-nineteenth century deserve particular attention in a study of fallen women for several reasons. First, as conservative and conventional as these novels may appear, they frequently have at their heart some sort of sexual transgression or threat of one. In *Sex Scandal: The Private Parts of Victorian Fiction*, William A. Cohen highlights the ironic reputation of Victorians. "Victorian Britain," he writes, "is mainly remembered for two things: sexual prudishness and long novels" (1). He shows this view to be ironic by pointing to the sex scandals at the heart of the period's realist fiction—the fiction most associated, deservedly or not, with conservative, Victorian ethics. Cohen shows that the "typical" Victorian novel is a narrative of "recovery" (17). Characters seek to recover "a fortune, benefactor, parent, child, sibling, or spouse," and "The course of recovery necessitates disclosure of a secret, which has been hidden because it is in some way immoral or illegal; most often, it involves adultery or illegitimacy" (17). The central figure of this scandal is often the fallen woman. She is the secret hidden away whose exposure will bring ruin and push other characters to their limits, and she appears in some of the most beloved Victorian novels. Importantly, while these novels are

narratives of recovery, the fallen woman typically is not the one for whom recovery is possible. In *David Copperfield*, as in *The Mill on the Floss*, emigration is presented as a better option for fallen women than recovery in English society, while recovery is reserved for the male protagonist. He succeeds in light of the failure of the woman who falls. In many novels, even when the fallen woman is not a primary character, the risk she poses still threatens to wreak havoc. The threat of falling remains—Maggie Tulliver might ruin herself, and the angel might become the whore. Beth Kalikoff describes these characters as “falling women.” We witness, in *Jane Eyre*, *Mary Barton*, and *The Mill on the Floss*, the temptations these women must face and their struggles “to become both moral and active” (Kalikoff 358). A key tension in these texts emerges as women work to retrain their integrity while they strive for agency and social mobility.

Second, the giants of mid-nineteenth-century realism, Charles Dickens and George Eliot, established conventions that would be mimicked and challenged throughout the period, so in a dissertation that concerns itself with the development of imperial culture and identity, it is crucial that their work be examined. Their novels explore the tension between the individual and society, and in studying these texts, we can see the ways literature both recorded and influenced how the individuals understood themselves in relation to a society expanding through economic, political, and cultural imperialism. As George Levine writes,

the Victorian novel often becomes a kind of education in connectedness, with all the religious, ethical, and aesthetic implications the connectedness has. The Victorians inherited from their romantic predecessors (and contemporaries) an imagination of the organic connection among all things, connections natural, historical, religious, and ethical. ‘What connection can there be?’ is a question

that drives a significant proportion of Victorian novels as it drives the new social organizations that emerged from a culture of new anonymity and uncertainty of personal identity. (15)

These novels offer a glimpse of the broader society by allowing us to see how individuals understand themselves in relation to it. Additionally, “Realist fiction was one primary mode through which subjectivity was given form in the nineteenth century; it helped to shape cultural models of self-understanding” (Anderson 10).

These novels not only explore the connections between the individual and society, but they also highlight the qualities of social harmony. “The Victorian novel,” Levine argues, “tends toward comic form...because as it pursues narratives of its largely middle-class protagonists, it tends to conclude in a movement toward union in marriage and in social harmony” (13). By examining the conclusions of these novels, then, we can see how these authors understood and envisioned a balanced social order—including who becomes assimilated and who does not. In particular, I am interested in how a patriarchal society does not assimilate deviant female sexuality and the ways this connects with Britain’s imperial power and sense of itself. The *bildungsroman*, in particular, traces this assimilation process as it follows the protagonist from childhood to adulthood. In a *bildungsroman*, the protagonist learns, sometimes painfully, to assimilate and find his or her rightful place in society. Levine’s description of this genre again is helpful here:

It is in the pursuit of worldly success that the protagonist is most vulnerable to moral failure. And it thus becomes critical—one of the most distinctive characteristics of Victorian fiction—that protagonists achieve worldly success without pursuing money directly. The social crises that the *Bildungsroman* tends

to emblemize are crises both because the social order threatens to destabilize and because traditional moral values become in this context particularly fragile. In novel after novel there are tensions between the novelists' effort to keep the protagonists honest, and the other narrative impulse, to make sure that a comic ending, with worldly success bestowed, is possible. (23)

One way that these characters succeed without pursuing money directly is through moral superiority. Pip in *Great Expectations*, for example, is unable to keep the wealth he would have inherited from Magwitch, so he does not attain the kind of monetary success for which he had originally hoped. He does, however, become noble, humble, and honest in his loyalty to his benefactor and friendships with Herbert, Clara, Joe, and Biddy. Pip's maturity at the end of the text marks him as successful and admirable despite his failure to become the wealthy gentleman of his dreams.

The empire, of course, plays an important role in *Great Expectations* as well. The penal colony provides Magwitch's punishment and opportunity as he serves his sentence but he also earns enough money to make Pip a gentleman and provide for his living and education. This combination of punishment and opportunity is an important one as it frequently describes the imperial experience portrayed in realist fiction: one of hardship but also of new life. In *Rule of Darkness: British Literature and Imperialism, 1830-1914*, Patrick Brantlinger writes, "In the middle of the most serious domestic concerns, often in the most unlikely tests, the Empire may intrude as a shadowy realm of escape, renewal, banishment, or return for characters who for one reason or another need to enter or exit from scenes of domestic conflict" (12). Brantlinger's description perfectly portrays Magwitch's experience of Australia. The colony is a site of banishment as Magwitch is sentenced to serve there as a convict, a place of financial renewal as

he “got money” and his “liberty” there, and the desired site of escape and return at the end of the novel when Pip seeks to get him out of England and away from the authorities (293).

Magwitch is also important in the novel because of the ways he affects the protagonist; this criminal literally and figuratively furnishes Pip’s growth. Magwitch makes the financial arrangements for his livelihood and schooling so that Pip can move up in the world, and Magwitch’s unfailing devotion pushes Pip to recognize his own foolishness and mature in his understanding of class, culpability, and true friendship. Magwitch, the outsider, the outcast, the criminal, helps Pip to develop into a moral individual. Like Maggie Tulliver, Magwitch does not survive inside England. His influence on Pip is so strong that Pip leaves England too, looking for renewal and, perhaps, escape.

These examples from *Great Expectations* help illustrate the interconnectedness of identity formation, empire, and deviance. Disciplinary action in the novel is explicit as Magwitch is a convicted criminal. This action becomes more covert in novels featuring fallen women and deploying the British Empire, but the Othering of Magwitch and fallen women has similarities: these deviant characters help spur development in the male characters with whom they interact. Grace Moore connects these two groups in Dickens, fallen women and convicts, and argues

that in Dickens’s mind these women could only be completely rehabilitated if they were removed from the ‘corrupting’ elements present in industrial Britain, and the stigma that would be attached to them as ‘fallen’ women. Such a stance presents an interesting paradox when juxtaposed with the prohibition imposed by society against the return of convicts. In Dickens’s imagination such less-than-desirable elements seem to inhabit a bizarre dual position as both *symptoms* of the

shortcomings of society and also contributors to the *cause* of its decay. In either case their return was to be secured against. (8)

Fallen women in these novels help highlight the purity and social maturity of the protagonists—they function as a foil, an Other to the man or woman with whom the authors want readers to identify. This does not mean that the fallen woman does not gain sympathy from readers; indeed, she might be a pitiable character for whom we hope the best, considering the situation. Nonetheless, the identity of the protagonist solidifies while the character is in relationship with the fallen woman. Like Pip, whose identity solidifies when he connects with Magwitch, the protagonist matures and shows his moral aptitude in response to his connection with the fallen woman. Her lack of control and transgression makes possible and highlights the protagonist's self control and triumph. Amanda Anderson in *Tainted Souls and Painted Faces: The Rhetoric of Fallenness in Victorian Culture* describes the process this way:

Most prominently, fallenness is assimilated to narrative itself, identified or equated with a 'downward path.' In the realist novel, for example, fallen women often highlight the coercive logic of the conventional narratives or genres through which literary character is rendered. The fallen woman's extreme predicament allows other forms of characterization to appear less determined; if she's so trapped, the narrative logic implies, the protagonist and the other privileged characters must be free. (9)

This freedom is part of what makes these protagonists so engaging—they seem to have the opportunity to transform and adapt.

Pip, in the example I gave earlier, seems to have the freedom to become the man that he does, but literary critics since Michel Foucault and, more specifically, D. A. Miller have been

sceptical of the ways that a novel seems to convey freedom and resist policing. In this chapter, I focus on discrete disciplinary action that gives the *illusion* of unrestricted character development. As Foucault and Miller both make clear, disciplinary power's "pettiness" and "diffusion" keep it "invisible or visible only under cover of other, nobler or simply blander intentionalities (to educate, to cure, to produce, to defend)" (Miller 17). This form of power differs from traditional power, which is "founded...in the spectacle of its force" (18). From Miller's perspective,

The aim of such regulation is to enforce not so much a norm as the normality of normativeness itself. Rather than in rendering all its subjects uniformly 'normal,' discipline is interested in putting in place a perceptual grid in which a division between the normal and deviant inherently imposes itself. Concomitantly, discipline attenuates the role of actual supervisors by enlisting the consciousness of its subjects in the work of supervision. (18)

I point to moments when this perceptual grid dividing the normal and deviant becomes visible and reveals disciplinary action towards the deviant; I also show how the disciplinary nature of this grid is masked as normal and contributes to the perception that the protagonist is free, less determined, and more realistic as a result. Anderson discusses this tension between the protagonist's freedom and the fallen woman's restriction. She writes,

It is not that fallen women are somehow textually determined while other characters are not—after all, at a certain level all literary characters are 'false' and 'fictional' and constituted by narrative. Yet within the constructed fictions of many nineteenth-century realist texts, the fallen woman appears as both hyperdetermined and disturbingly 'false' (painted, melodramatic, histrionic); this

portrayal in turn creates an effect of greater verisimilitude around the nonfallen.

(10)

My argument differs from Anderson's in that I take into consideration the ways that Britain's imperial power affects the hyperdetermined nature of the fallen woman and accommodates her punishment and upholds patriarchal standards of gender and sexuality. The disciplinary action I examine in *David Copperfield* and *Adam Bede* reinforces the bolstering relationship between female sexuality, patriarchy, and empire as it punishes deviant female sexuality while assimilating the male protagonist into normative patriarchal society.

While I am interested in the fallen women of these novels, the books are named after the men and center on their endurance and maturing during times of trial. My attention, therefore, splits between the development of these male characters and the disciplinary action against the disgraced female characters. In my analysis of each novel, I begin with the protagonists, David and Adam, and then move to discuss the sexual transgressions of the texts that require imperial intervention. My intention is not to subordinate these women and their experiences but rather to show how crucial they are in the novels since their actions ultimately push forward the normalization of the men with whom readers are supposed to identify.

3.2 Discipline and Maturity in *David Copperfield*

While a number of Dickens's works could be examined here, *Oliver Twist*, *Bleak House*, or *Hard Times*, I have chosen *David Copperfield* for a few reasons. First, I have chosen the novel because of the way Dickens traces the development of two characters from childhood to adulthood: the hero of the novel, David, and his dear friend, Em'ly. We see two children grow up in this novel, and we witness their assimilation process, rocky as it may be, into English society. While Em'ly is only one of several female characters in the text, the title page of the

first edition, published in 1850 by Bradbury & Evans, makes clear her importance as it features her rather than David. Readers know from the title on whom this novel will focus, but the image that accompanies it features a young girl, alone on a beach. Even though the novel focuses on the development of a young boy, this girl, the title page suggests, will play a key role in his growth.⁶ Em'ly supplanted David further when Andrew Halliday chose to use *her name* to title his stage adaptation of the novel. Instead of calling the drama in four acts *David Copperfield*, he called it *Little Em'ly* (Hartley 186). Thus, Em'ly's importance was clear in the initial publication of the novel and in the public's reception and re-imagining of it.

Second, *David Copperfield* is worthy of close examination because of the array and depth of the novel's female characters and the fallen women's significance in that group. Dickens creates a cast so varied that he breaks down the paradigm of English womanhood as magdalens and madonnas; he creates weak women and strong women, earnest women and maniacal women, women whose interiors are visible from the outside along with women whose interiors cannot be detected from their outward appearance. Within this cast of characters, the fallen woman's importance is particularly striking; one might think that among women as varied as Miss Mowcher, Dora Copperfield, Betsey Trotwood, Annie Strong, Rosa Dartle, Peggotty, and Agnes Wickfield, the fallen woman would not garner much attention. Em'ly's significance in the novel

⁶ Additionally, the frontispiece of this edition of *David Copperfield* does not include a picture of the protagonist either. It features another important female in the text: David's aunt, Betsy Trotwood. Subsequent editions published in London and beyond feature different illustrations as the frontispiece and on the title page. Some of these later illustrations do feature David, but Em'ly's presence on the title page of the first edition remains important in highlighting her significance.

reveals how deviant female sexuality serves as *the critical marker* in Victorian society; the society Dickens depicts in his novel can accommodate women as various as Miss Mowcher, Annie Strong, and Rosa Dartle, but it cannot accommodate women like Martha Endell and Em'ly Peggotty.⁷

In addition to a deep female cast, Dickens also constructs a variety of romantic relationships, some successful, some not, but all of them complicated. J. Hillis Miller claims that “*David Copperfield* is the first of [Dickens’s] novels to organize itself around the complexities of romantic love” (150). Indeed, many of the challenges David faces, which lead him to mature, are the conflicts arising among the couples of the novel. First, of course, is his mother and her death-causing second marriage to Mr. Murdstone, followed in turn by Jack Maldon’s inappropriate desire for Annie Strong, Em’ly’s illicit relationship with Steerforth, Betsey Trotwood’s secret financial backing of her husband, and David’s marriage to Dora, the “child-wife” who diminishes over a “weary, weary while” and dies (Dickens 769). There are a variety of romantic relationships in the novel, but the unsanctioned romantic attachments of Martha and Em’ly garner social stigmatization—while the others do not. Martha Endell, “a young woman, that Em’ly knowed once,” lost her reputation through some illicit relationship and ultimately leaves the community to try and survive on her own in London (344). She comes to visit Em’ly and asks for help, Em’ly at first cannot see her since her uncle is home and “he couldn’t, kind-naturd, tender-hearted as he is, see them two together, side by side, for all the treasures that’s wrecked in the sea” (345). Mr. Wickfield responds similarly when he believes Annie Strong has had an affair with Jack Maldon. He steps between his daughter Agnes and Annie when he sees

⁷ An editorial from the April 13, 1857 issue of *The Times* calls deviant sexuality of “younger women of the lower classes” the “greatest of our social evils” (“London”).

them about to embrace and say goodbye (290). These reactions illustrate how sexually transgressive women (and those who are perceived as such, like Annie Strong and Maggie Tulliver) are actively marked as disgraceful and how the initial reactions to their sexual choices are responses of separation and shunning.

While these women struggle to survive ostracization, Dickens shows us how David develops and finds his place in the social order and the role that sexually deviant women play in that process. The opening pages of the novel reveal Dickens's interest in identity formation and, more specifically, in the liminal status of his protagonist. The first sentence shows how the narrative will focus on identity formation: "Whether I shall turn out to be the hero of my own life, or whether that station will be held by anybody else, these pages must show" (13). Here the narrator reveals the process of identity formation and the difficulty of predicting the outcome of that process. With this, *David Copperfield*, a novel of middle-class triumph, begins in uncertainty. The significance of this opening sentence resides in the way it discloses the possibility of displacement by an outside force: someone else could be the hero of this narrative. As he introduces readers to his personal history, David makes clear that identity formation is relational or dependent, to a degree, on his life in comparison with and in reaction to others. There is a position that he will occupy or someone else will. Additionally, David's identity, while relational, also lacks transparency; it is not clear to David, as narrator, whether he is heroic—the pages will show the hero—and this suggests, here in the first sentence, how the maturity process will be a discrete one. The disciplinary process of maturation will not make itself visible; rather, it will make itself seem natural, so innocuous it escapes notice. Relational identity formation for David mimics what happens on a broader scale in which "Britishness" becomes "superimposed over an array of internal differences in response to contact with the

Other, and above all in response to conflict with the Other” (Colley 6). Having only read the first sentence, readers do not yet know who his Other might be or the chance David has at securing the position of hero. Instead, readers meet David Copperfield in a liminal space. He might be the hero or he might not be.

The rest of the opening paragraph further emphasizes this character’s liminality: “To begin my life with the beginning of my life, I record that I was born (as I have been informed and believe on a Friday, at twelve o’clock at night. It was remarked that the clock began to strike, and I began to cry, simultaneously” (Dickens 13). As David is born between two days, he is also born amidst predictions of good and bad luck. The nurse present claims that because “of the day and hour” of the birth, David will “be unlucky in life” and “privileged to see ghosts and spirits” (13). Although the narrator does not seem to take this idea seriously, it again warns readers that David might not turn out as he would like, reminding them that despite good intentions, an unlucky kid might just fail.

This opening does not instill confidence in readers about David’s ability to succeed, but he does have something going for him: he has a caul covering his head at birth—a good omen.⁸

⁸ A caul is the “amnion or inner membrane enclosing the foetus before birth; *esp.* this or a portion of it sometimes enveloping the head of the child at birth, superstitiously regarded as a good omen, and supposed to be a preservative against drowning” (“Caul”). The caul’s folklore status is worth noting since the threat of drowning runs throughout *David Copperfield*. Several members of the extended Peggotty family have drowned, Martha considers drowning herself, Little Em’ly fears drowning, and Ham and Steerforth both die at sea during a terrible storm. The superstitions associated with the caul are as follows:

Born with this rare, good luck charm, perhaps *he will* become the hero. This bit of luck, however, is also quickly undermined as the caul goes up for sale. The one thing he has going for him comes to be raffled and an old woman gets it. This detail is both humorous and cruelly ironic as an old woman probably does not need the luck of the caul as much as David or a sailor would. She is old and “had never been on the water in her life,” so she has no need for this kind of charm (14). David’s loss of this good-luck charm makes readers wonder again whether this boy will be able to become the hero of his life, and it emphasizes that anything, even the idea of something supernatural, can be sold. While a small detail, this caul and its sale model the way a male’s position, his very success in life, can be threatened and changed in an instant. For David, his success is all the more sweet because of the adversities he overcomes, be they the sale of a

If a child is born with his head covered by the thin membrane commonly called a caul, or a mask, he will never be drowned, provided that he keeps the caul. It is not enough to be so born; if the caul is lost or thrown away, the immunity vanishes with it, and if the caul is sold, its power passes to the buyer. For this reason, cauls are quite often bought by sailors, especially in times of war, for prices varying from £5 to £20....A sailor who carries a caul about with him is not only safe from drowning himself, but the ship in which he sails will never sink so long as he remains on board. (Hole 186)

The sale of David’s caul removes any luck he may have gained from it, but his ultimate success in the novel shows how Dickens wishes us to see David as capable of overcoming disadvantage. Furthermore, this detail, though small, conveys the sense that David is a free agent, able to determine his place in the world on his own terms, rather than an individual who learns to fit within an established patriarchal society.

good luck charm, his mother's death, his poverty, or the disgrace of his dear friend Em'ly. Even if David's behavior becomes more normative and restrained, his success in times of trial make it seem as though he acts freely and defies social expectations.

Dickens starts us out on shaky ground, unsure if this boy will succeed, and David is typical among Dickens's protagonists in this way. "Like Oedipus," writes J. Hillis Miller, "who, as a newborn baby, was put out in the fields to die, Dickens' heroes and heroines have never experienced this perfect security. Each becomes aware of himself as isolated from all that is outside of himself" (251). David's liminality and insecurity at the beginning of the novel help create the misleading sense of freedom D. A. Miller and Amanda Anderson describe in their criticism. From their perspective, while David seems to defy odds with his moral aptitude and work ethic, his success, marriage, fame, and financial security, are the result of a disciplinary process that generates normative behavior.

In chapter 18, for example, we see David's recollections of particular moments during his early teenage years that mark his growth—moments of "unseen progress" that he makes visible in his reflective narration (Dickens 274). David, when faced with failure, learns to cope by adopting "expressions of gender" (Butler 34). The growth he records in this retrospective account is made to seem natural, expected, and nearly unseen, though it is the result of conflict, environment, chance, and sexual experience. David thinks back to his time at Doctor Strong's school and reflects, "My school-days! The silent gliding on of my existence—the unseen, unfelt progress of my life—from childhood up to youth! Let me think, as I look back upon that flowing water, now a dry channel overgrown with leaves, whether there are any marks along its course, by which I can remember how it ran" (Dickens 274).

In this chapter, David's maturity is signalled by his successful performances of masculinity, which he enacts in response to encounters with female sexuality. This chapter, which compresses many years of development into a short retrospective, traces David's attachment to a series of young women. Clearly, we see David experiencing the trials and tribulations of puberty, his innocent attraction to girls with whom he becomes temporarily obsessed. His first crush is Miss Shepherd, whose name expresses the way she guides David towards sexual maturity: "Once, I kiss Miss Shepherd in the cloak room. Ecstasy!" (276). This relationship, in typical teenage fashion, is short lived as Miss Shepherd's interests shift to another boy. After David describes this snub from his love interest, he recounts his conflict with the butcher, "a broad-faced, bull-necked young butcher, with rough red cheeks, an ill-conditioned mind, and an injurious tongue" who "is the terror of the youth of Canterbury" (276). This butcher is not direct competition for Miss Shepherd's affections, but David feels the need to assert himself by fighting him. David fails miserably, going home with a swollen face and bruised ego. This moment emphasizes how relations between men and women impact relations between men and how David's relations with others help solidify his identity as normative. Moreover, David's actions reveal how hard he works to become the hero of his life and that this heroism depends, in part, upon relations between men and women. Dickens shows David's maturity by repeating this formula again when David's next crush, Miss Larkins, becomes engaged to a hop-grower. Here is how David responds to the young woman's betrothal:

I am terribly dejected for about a week or two. I take off my ring, I wear my worst clothes, I use no bear's grease, and I frequently lament over the late Miss Larkins's faded flower. Being, by that time, rather tired of this kind of life, and having received new provocation from the butcher, I throw the flower away, go

out with the butcher, and gloriously defeat him. This, and the resumption of my ring, as well as of the bear's grease in moderation, are the least marks I can discern, now, in my progress to seventeen. (281)

Here we see David's reassertion of masculinity after his failure to gain the romantic attachment of Miss Larkins. Just as he did after his previous romantic failure, he goes out and faces the butcher, and this fight helps him assimilate further and regain "moderation" in his behavior.

While this event does not include explicit references to empire or fallen women, this turning point in David's development illustrates the productive tension between patriarchy and female sexuality. In this instance, the relationship between them is supportive rather than destabilizing; Miss Larkin's rejection of David and acceptance of another man results in David's desire to enter into a violent competition with another young man and his re-adoption of masculine habits. The young woman's behavior is not deviant—she marries appropriately and does not threaten to deteriorate the nuclear family that underpins society. Her behavior hurts David, of course, so he responds by working to reassert himself and his position after this failure. Thus, even though Miss Larkin becomes engaged to someone else, her action encourages David to establish himself within the male community, and he does this by fighting the butcher. As David's relationship with Em'ly shows, this supportive relationship changes when the woman's behavior is deviant. Fallenness, relationships with men outside of marriage and outside the sanction of polite society, threatens to undermine the male community that relies on marriage conventions and laws that locate power in the male position. As I discussed earlier, this destabilization creates a need for disciplinary action made possible by Britain's imperial power.

David continues to assimilate and moderate as he enters adulthood, and his socialization results from a productive tension between patriarchy and female sexuality. This tension is

productive in that it moves David forward towards maturity and his acceptance of social norms. Just as growth moments became visible in his relations with attractive young women, his maturity further crystallizes in his courtship with Dora Spenlow. His relationship with Dora begins with the kind of obsessiveness that marked his youth (that which he had for James Steerforth at school and that which he had for the young women in Canterbury). As he describes their first meeting, David recollects, “I don’t remember who was there, except Dora. I have not the least idea what we had for dinner, besides Dora. My impression is, that I dined off Dora, entirely, and sent away half-a-dozen plates untouched” (399). David even recognizes the foolishness with which he entered this relationship, but does not look down on it; rather, he looks at this as a period of innocence and wonder from which he will eventually mature. After dining with her, he thinks,

To be allowed to call her ‘Dora,’ to write to her, to dote upon and worship her, to have reason to think that when she was with other people she was yet mindful of me, seemed to me the summit of human ambition—I am sure it was the summit of mine. There is no doubt whatever that I was a lackadaisical young spooney; but there was a purity of heart in all this still, that prevents my having quite a contemptuous recollection of it, let me laugh as I may. (402)

While this courtship begins with naive obsession, David’s attraction to Dora and desire for her to be his wife pushes him to mature and adopt habits that will gain him financial security and social status. His aunt’s financial woes forces him to work like never before, but Dora motivates him, through and through, and he notes how this changes him:

When I found myself on the familiar Highgate road, pursuing such a different errand from that old one of pleasure, with which it was associated, it seemed as if

a complete change had come on my whole life. But that did not discourage me.

With the new life, came new purpose, new intention. Great was the labor;

priceless the reward. Dora was the reward, and Dora must be won. (526)

David's "winning" of Dora helps solidify his place in the social order, and while this accomplishment seems like the natural result of human sexuality, his relationship with Dora also signals David's assimilation into the patriarchal. His family life, up until now, has been messy and insecure, plagued by death, escape, and surrogate parents. Now he has a chance with Dora to create the nuclear family that underpins Victorian society. In this sense, his attraction to Dora and their marriage bolsters patriarchal ideals of home and family and is productive in that David finds his career path and further comes into his own.

The marriage does not remain productive, though, as David and Dora do not have children and as Dora fails to mature alongside her husband. Her arrested state of childishness no longer supports David's ambitions. Her death seems inevitable and she becomes progressively weaker and fails to energize her husband's creativity, sexual desire, or social climb. David's second and better-matched marriage to Agnes shows Dickens's awareness that productive, healthy marriages best serving the social needs of the partners and community are those built upon a common "mind and purpose" (668). Agnes, "the good angel" of the novel fulfils all of David's desires. She is beautiful like Dora, but wise, understanding, reproductive, and unfaltering. While David continues to grow and change throughout the novel, Agnes "did not once show...any change in herself. What she had been to me, she still was; wholly unaltered" (862). Agnes loves in the way that Coventry Patmore would later describe in "The Angel in the House" as "with love that cannot tire; / And when, ah woe, she loves alone, / Through passionate duty love springs higher, / As grass grows taller round a stone" (21-24). This kind of enduring,

stable, sacrificing love in which compatibility matters more than passion allows David to become the hero of his life and to achieve worldly success without pursuing money directly. This mimics the way that imperial success in the nineteenth century could not be seen as purely capitalistic gain. The Empire could not be a civilizing mechanism if the motives for maintaining and growing it were purely financial; rather, in addition to having financial rationale, the imperial enterprise must also be morally sound, scientifically endorsed, and somehow seen as mutually beneficial. Agnes creates the kind of domestic bliss for David that was never possible with Dora and that Em'ly, after eloping with Steerforth, would never create for a husband.⁹ David's maturity becomes complete with a compatible wife who allows him to enjoy all of the benefits of his profession and class while not being perceived as pursuing these benefits directly.

The ideal relationship between female sexuality and patriarchy is in marriage, and David's marriages show the delicacy of that balance. Dora, while angelic, is silly, unable to keep the house, more like her little dog Jip than a supportive life partner. Dora's increased weakness and death threaten to disrupt the success that David has earned while working for her love and comfort, but the presence of Agnes and her continued love for David prevents calamity and restores the productive tension between patriarchal ideals and women's sexual roles. With Agnes, David "advanced in fame and fortune" and his "domestic joy was perfect" (871). The domestic tranquillity sustained by Agnes promotes and protects David's social status.

⁹ Ben Griffin succinctly describes the Victorian domestic ideology that promotes a peaceful home dedicated to the needs of the husband: "The home needed to be peaceful to allow a man to contemplate God and to provide him with the peace and love he required to develop his character, so that he could protect himself against the sinfulness of the public sphere" (41).

While David's romantic and social future is shaky at times, Dickens shows how order is kept and made productive—through a marriage without “disparity” in “mind and purpose” (Dickens 668). Other relationships in the novel show how the balance between female sexuality and patriarchy can implode and require another force to return balance to the social order. When the tension between women and patriarchal society becomes unstable, because of unsanctioned female sexuality, empire releases that tension by offering another route to divide the deviant from the normal. The energizing myth of empire, in this case, is that Britain's colonies can solve problems at home, can bring order into a chaotic world.¹⁰ Although this bildungsroman “does not attend directly to the criticism of social institutions in the manner of *Oliver Twist*, *Bleak House*, *Hard Times*, or *Little Dorrit*, it is still a novel concerned with that finally unmanageable problem of ordering a disordered world, and thus it includes in its critical focus a representative list of institutions, from school, church, and government to that basic social institution, the family” (Hornback 651). The families of the novel, as I discussed earlier, are complex couplings whose survivals or benefits are frequently questioned by David. These rocky, unconventional, or scandalous relationships create the tension in the novel and reveal friction between deviant

¹⁰ The term “energizing myth” comes from Martin Green's *Dreams of Adventure, Deeds of Empire* in which he argues that adventure tales served as “the energizing myth of English imperialism” (3). I have chosen to adopt his term because it conveys the generative power of ideas concerning empire. Elleke Boehmer similarly applies Green's term more broadly; he writes, “In its attempt to comprehend other lands, and also in its need to propagate itself and, importantly, legitimize its presence, colonial authority depended on imaginative backing, what have usefully been called *energizing myths*—of the New World, of the Empire on which the sun would never set” (23).

female sexuality and patriarchy's reliance on the domestic, reproductive wife. The unfulfilling romantic relationships in the novel create a need for stabilization. As Bert G. Hornback contends, "The world of *David Copperfield* is fully a world of chaos and the threats of chaos, and what the good people must do, for their own safety and sanity, is find and re-establish order" (653).

Britain's imperial power makes re-establishing order possible in *David Copperfield* by providing for the accommodation or exit of chaos-engendering characters. This first occurs in the storyline of Jack Maldon and Annie Strong. Mr. Wickfield suspects that the cousins are having an inappropriate relationship, so he arranges for Jack to go to India to be "a cadet, or something of that kind" (Dickens 249).¹¹ David, still a young boy, does not fully understand Mr. Wickfield's actions at the time or the suspicions surrounding Jack and Annie. Nonetheless, he does view India as an exotic place and imagines Jack "the bosom friend of all the Rajahs in the east, sitting under canopies, smoking curly golden pipes—a mile long, if they could be straightened out" (252). Jack's departure causes Annie to experience a swoon, further hinting at their illicit relationship to Mr. Wickfield and David. Mr. Wickfield's actions are less about preserving the relationship of Dr. Strong and his wife than about protecting Agnes, his daughter, from an unfaithful woman like Annie. It is bad enough that Jack's presence would threaten one marriage, but that Annie's disgrace should influence Agnes is another thing—this could bring

¹¹ This arrangement mimics the damage-mitigating one in *Mansfield Park* that I discussed in the previous chapter in which Sir Thomas takes his eldest son to Antigua "in the hope of detaching him from some bad connections at home" (Austen 25). The son in *Mansfield Park*, like Jack in *David Copperfield*, makes his way home to England despite his continued ability to make trouble.

about more chaos and disorder. Jack's new post overseas is thus seen as a solution to a difficult domestic problem. Jack's exit from England is only a temporary solution since he returns home feigning illness, but Mr. Wickfield's interpretation of Annie's actions, his thought that new employment in India would solve the domestic dispute, and his desire to rid the Doctor's home of deviancy in order to protect his own daughter show how he understood that empire could offer an exit from domestic conflict and a way to relieve tension between deviant female sexuality and the normative expectations of English patriarchy (Brantlinger, *Rule of Darkness* 12). Jack's return also illustrates how men can become reintegrated into the fabric of English society, while fallen women are unable to regain their positions or value after their transgression.

Dickens reinforces the connection between deviancy and empire in the storyline of the Peggotty family. Em'ly's elopement with Steerforth is the central scandal of the book. Their coupling damages multiple relationships in the novel, that between David and Steerforth, those between Steerforth, his mother, and Rosa, and, of course, that between Ham and Em'ly. Even as this elopement drives the plot of the novel, it happens largely offstage. There are hints along the way that Em'ly is a young woman at risk to fall, but we do not witness her transgression directly. Em'ly's family history and fear of drowning as a child warn readers that she is susceptible to seduction. When David first meets her, Ham, and Mr. Peggotty, he learns that Ham's father and Em'ly father were both "Drowndead" (45). While talking with Em'ly on the beach, she tells David that she is "afraid of the sea" as she has "seen it very cruel to some of our men" and "seen it tear a boat as big as our house, all to pieces" (46). It certainly is understandable that a child who has witnessed such things would be frightened of the sea, but her fears also foreshadow her sexual transgression. While they spend time together near the water, David discovers that his "orphanhood" and Em'ly's were different—primarily in terms of class. Em'ly tells David, "your

father was a gentleman and your mother is a lady; and my father was a fisherman and my mother was a fisherman's daughter, and my uncle Dan is a fisherman" (47). Her comment shows the fixed nature of her position; David seems able to accomplish more since his parents were not tied to a particular trade. This prompts David to ask her if she "would like to be a lady," and Em'ly says that she would (47). One might identify the root of Em'ly's sin in this moment: unlike David who does not pursue monetary gain directly, Em'ly openly states her desire to move up in the world and perhaps this desire contributes to her interest in Steerforth, a man significantly above her in terms of wealth. Em'ly even admits later to being "a weak, vain girl" when Rosa Dartle comes to see and chastise her (725). But as a young child, Em'ly's desire for money is a desire for protection for her and her adopted family. She tells David, "We would all be gentlefolks together, then. Me, and uncle, and Ham, and Mrs. Gummidge. We wouldn't mind then, when there come stormy weather.—Not for our own sakes, I mean. We would for the poor fishermen's, to be sure, and we'd help 'em with money when they come to any hurt" (47). At this tender age, Em'ly is already aware of the way that money can shelter a person from outside threats and that remaining where she is, she continues to be vulnerable to the storms that come. David fears for her too, seeing her walk closely to a "sort of old jetty or wooden causeway," but she tells him, "'I'm not afraid in this way,' said little Em'ly. 'But I wake when it blows, and tremble to think of uncle Dan and Ham, and believe I hear 'em crying out for help. That's why I should like so much to be a lady. But I'm not afraid in this way. Not a bit. Look here!'" (48). Em'ly's awareness of the sea's danger along with her willingness to tread boldly into it hint that she might succumb to one of life's storms.

This vignette of Em'ly's childhood also signals her future fall because of the fallen woman's association with water and drowning in Victorian literature and culture—specifically

the association between fallen women and suicide by drowning. I already highlighted the demise of Maggie Tulliver, who drowns alongside her brother in a flood, and Hetty Sorrel, as I will discuss in more detail later in this chapter, thinks about drowning herself as a way to escape her shame (Eliot, *Adam Bede* 413), but the trope of the drowned fallen woman also appears in paintings and poetry of the nineteenth century. Thomas Hood's poem "The Bridge of Sighs" (1844) describes the discovery of a woman who has drowned, and he makes clear that her death comes as the result of her impurity and social ostracization:

Touch her not scornfully;
Think of her mournfully,
Gently and humanly;
Not of the stains of her,
All that remains of her
Now is pure womanly.

Make no deep scrutiny
Into her mutiny
Rash and undutiful:
Past all dishonour,
Death has left on her
Only the beautiful. (15-26)

The speaker sees this woman redeemed by the water and returned to purity through her "rash and undutiful" act of suicide. Hood's poem inspired other artistic depictions of female suicides including George Frederic Watts's *Found Drowned* (1848-1850), which also highlights the

beauty of the woman in death and the tragedy of her anguished act. Augustus Leopold Egg's triptych *Past and Present* (1858) depicts the consequences of a woman's fall in three parts and ends similarly with a scene near the water:

In the first scene the family are still together, and the husband has just learned of his wife's adultery. The second scene takes place five years later. The father has recently died and the mother has been driven out of her home, a fallen woman. The two orphaned girls comfort each other, the elder gazing sadly over the rooftops towards the moon. In this third picture the moon occupies the same position in the sky, indicating that the scene is taking place at the same time. The children's mother, now destitute, has taken refuge under one of the Adelphi arches....Under her shawl she shelters a young child, clearly the result of her adulterous affair, which is now over. (Fowl)

These depictions of drowned women further the trope of the fallen woman as desperate and prone to suicide.¹² Dickens picks this up in *David Copperfield* not just with the references to Em'ly's fear of the sea and drowning but also with Martha. David and Mr. Peggotty follow Martha through the streets of London to enlist her help in finding Em'ly. Not knowing that they are following her, she goes down to the river, and David realizes with what purpose she approaches the water: "I did not approach her solitary figure without trembling; for this gloomy end to her determined walk, and the way in which she stood, almost within the cavernous shadow of the iron bridge, looking at the lights crookedly reflected in the strong tide, inspired a dread within me" (686). The two men grab her and pull her away from the water, and Martha cries, "I know that I belong to it. I know that it's the natural company of such as I am! It comes

¹² See Lynda Nead for further discussion of representations of fallen women in Victorian art.

from country places, where there was once no harm in it—and it creeps through the dismal streets, defiled and miserable—and it goes away, like my life, to a great sea, that is always troubled—and I feel that I must go with it” (687). Martha’s desperation, her willingness to end her life and identification with the polluted river, reveals how difficult the life of a fallen woman could be and warns readers that this might be in store for Em’ly if she does not return to Mr. Peggotty’s protective embrace.

We do not witness Em’ly’s fall, but these scenes and the cultural expectations produced by multitudinous depictions of suicidal fallen women push readers to see the possible results of Em’ly’s transgressive relationship. Em’ly might die, she might work as a prostitute, she might live in squalor as an outcast. Dickens’s depiction of Em’ly fits within a larger narrative of fallenness in the nineteenth century as he replicates common markers of her sin and its consequences. Several of these markers appear when David learns through Littimer about the deterioration of Em’ly and Steerforth’s relationship. He learns that the couple travelled to France, Switzerland, and Italy, that Steerforth eventually became restless and decided to abandon Em’ly and arranged for her to marry his employee, that Em’ly was outraged by this action “and had to be held by force; or if she couldn’t have got to a knife, or got to the sea, she’d have beaten her head against the marble floor” (676). According to Littimer, Em’ly became suicidal, mad, and murderous, so “It was necessary, in short, for a time, to take away everything nigh her, that she could do herself, or anybody else, an injury with, and to shut her up close” (676). Em’ly became the madwoman locked away who threatened to inflict her violent madness on these two men. Em’ly did manage to escape, and intelligence about her location and wellbeing disappears. David’s assumption of her death shows the pervasive understanding of the fallen woman’s life trajectory. After Em’ly has been gone many months, David admits that he “began to despair of

her recovery, and gradually to sink deeper and deeper into the belief that she was dead” (719). Using familiar tropes of fallenness, Dickens manages to collapse the distance between Em’ly and David. For such an important character in the text, Em’ly is removed from David, and thus readers, during most of the novel. He does not witness first hand her relationship with Steerforth, their life abroad, her violence, desperation, or return to England. Nonetheless, Dickens makes her position clear by incorporating common markers of fallenness and female desperation, and these details, though small and heard only through the reports of others, are important because they reveal the seemingly determined position of the fallen woman: she is on a downward trajectory that will end in poverty, madness, death, or all of the above. This sense of Em’ly fixedness contrasts with the sense of David’s freedom.

While the terrifying consequences of fallenness make Em’ly seem doomed, they also make emigration, though risky, a desirable course of action. Just as David seems to have both freedom and strong morals in comparison to Em’ly, emigration seems to be a natural and hopeful course of action in comparison to suicide, squalor, and social stigma in England. Dickens situates Em’ly’s emigration as the best option, considering the circumstances. The community cannot be expected to reframe its expectations of women and marriage; therefore, the most wholesome option for women like Em’ly and Martha is for them to leave the country and start a new life in Australia. They would not be alone, as over five and a half million Britons left home to settle in a colony while Victoria sat on the throne, and, as Mr. Peggotty remarks, “No one can’t reproach my darling in Australia” (Archibald 1, *David Copperfield* 735).

A letter to the editor of *The Times*, published on May 6, 1857, illustrates this historical relationship between fallen women, their communities, and emigration. The letter discusses the establishment of “The St. James’s Refuge and Home for Penitents,” an institution designed for

“fallen women of a class superior,” and describes the need for reform and safeguards: “The moral tone of society cannot remain uninjured by the demoralization of so many of its members. The atmosphere is tainted by it. The evil will creep higher, until the whole community becomes corrupt” (I. R. B. 7). At risk here is the whole community, and it is this community that needs protection. Britain’s colonies offer a way to protect the capital of the Empire, and the letter’s author suggests that “once a refuge or penitentiary has established a certain character for success in the treatment of its inmates less difficulty is found in the disposal of them than might be imagined. In this need, however, perhaps the most effectual resource of all would be emigration. Nothing alters the character and life so instantaneously and completely as a new start in a new country.” The writer admits that this is not the only option for these women, but it is the best one as its results are instantaneous and complete. Furthermore, he or she writes “that this is no attempt to perfect human nature, but simply to improve it; to relegate sin to a distance; to confine a natural instinct within legitimate bounds.” As the writer confesses here, complete control of female virtue is impossible; the community cannot perfect human nature, but the community can perform damage control and relegate sin to a distance from England’s shores.

Dickens presents emigration as a fitting and more natural option for these fallen women than life in London and prostitution. A new life overseas, the myth of a new start, offers a safer return to patriarchal balance in England than prostitution, which threatens the Victorian family through illegitimacy and disease. Dickens was an active participant in the debate over poverty, fallenness, and emigration. According to Grace Moore,

Emigration was contentious, as it did not deal with the causes of poverty and allowed the British government to continue to ignore the need for social reform. Since those who were able to fund their relocation were clearly not the people

who were most in need, societies arose to offer assistance to the would-be emigrant. Caroline Chisholm (later caricatured as Mrs Jellyby in *Bleak House*) was the founder of the Family Colonisation Loan Society, which lent would-be settlers half their fare in advance. Participants were subjected to a stringent screening process to ensure that loans would be repaid and that they would prosper in their new environment. Dickens was supportive of this scheme and worked with Chisholm on a series of articles entitled “A Bundle of Emigrants’ Letters,” which appeared in the first issues of *Household Words*. In particular, he was keen to prevent unskilled workers from uprooting their lives, only to discover greater misery thousands of miles away from home. (285)

In addition to supporting the work of Chisholm, Dickens also collaborated with Angela Burdett-Coutts in creating a refuge for fallen women called Urania Cottage. In a leaflet distributed to women in police custody, Dickens asks that these women consider coming to the Home where they would

be taught all household work that would be useful to them in a home of their own and enable them to make it comfortable and happy. In this home...they will be treated with the greatest kindness: will lead an active, cheerful, healthy life: will learn many things it is profitable and good to know, and being entirely removed from all who have any knowledge of their past career will begin life afresh and be able to win a good name and character. (“An Appeal”)

In this leaflet, Dickens offers concrete hope and promises “the certainty of all these blessings.”

Near the end of his “appeal,” Dickens presents a justification for emigration that complements my reading of *David Copperfield* and describes again that relationship between

fallen women, their communities, and emigration, which I have mapped in this dissertation as female sexuality, patriarchy, and empire. He writes,

And because it is not the lady's wish that these young women should be shut out from the world after they have repented and learned to do their duty there, and because it is her wish and object that they may be restored to society—a comfort to themselves and it—they will be supplied with every means, when some time shall have elapsed and their conduct shall have fully proved their earnestness and reformation, to go abroad, where in a distant country they may become the faithful wives of honest men, and live and die in peace. (“An Appeal”)

According to Dickens, Angela Burdett-Coutts does not want these women to “be shut out from the world,” she desires “that they may be restored to society,” but the society to which they will be restored will be British society in the broadest sense: they will go abroad and work to rebuild their lives in a location supplied by Britain’s imperial power. As one 1857 editorial puts it, they will move their “labour from one to another of the regions inhabited by the same Anglo-Saxon community” (“London” 6). Since they cannot be transformed into virtuous wives in England, they can go to a British colony, become a “faithful wives” there, and contribute to empire building through marriage and procreation. This move rejuvenates the empire, supplying needed workers and women, and relieves the destabilizing tension between fallen women and their native communities.

The exit of *David Copperfield*’s fallen women helps Dickens retain their dignity while also upholding Victorian domestic ideology that values purity and submission in a wife. Britain’s power and the ability to freely settle in a colonial territory allows Dickens, to a degree, to have it both ways: sympathy for the fallen and criticism for those who cruelly shun her

alongside the emigration of the fallen and the new wife who fits patriarchal ideals of purity and propriety. Dickens's perspective here matches the ambivalence of a lot of Victorian writing on the British Empire that

expressed criticism of the social conditions—poverty, unemployment, famine—that prompted Britons to move to the colonies or the United States. Charles Dickens, Elizabeth Gaskell, Charles Reade, George Eliot, Thomas Hardy, and many other novelists resorted to emigration as a way of rewarding deserving—sometimes undeserving—characters while underlining the social or personal problems they were leaving behind. (Brantlinger, *Victorian Literature* 2)

While I agree that the emigration narrative in *David Copperfield* conveys a sense of ambivalence towards the British Empire, I also see the ending of the novel as evidence of covert disciplinary action that imperial power makes possible. Emigration in the novel relieves the tension between deviant female sexuality and the stability of patriarchy, offering a noble alternative to what would otherwise be a spectacle of punishment—Em'ly's shunning from English society. I rely on D. A. Miller's conception of disciplinary power: "it is the policing power that never passes for such, but is either invisible or visible only under cover of other, nobler or simply blander intentionalities (to educate, to cure, to produce, to defend)" (17). Dickens's decision to offer emigration to Em'ly and Martha thus illustrates his tactful performance of disciplinary power. He seems to have it both ways, critiquing English society while allowing these poor people a new chance at life, but in actuality, he covers an act of discipline with a blander and more sympathetic intentionality to cure and defend the purity of English soil and, in particular, women.

3.3 Discipline and Relegation in *Adam Bede*

David Copperfield and *Adam Bede* are worth examining side by side for a number of reasons. They are not parallel fictions by any stretch, but their differences help highlight what the two novels have in common: the tension between deviant female sexuality and patriarchy that relies upon empire as a mediating force. *David Copperfield* traces the development of a young boy into an adult and features first-person narration and *Adam Bede* focuses on a young man in crisis and uses third-person narration that provides access to all the novel's characters and their thoughts. The settings are also distinctly different in time and place, as *Adam Bede*, while published after Dickens's novel, begins in 1799 and has a rural setting rather than an urban one. A close reading of *Adam Bede* provides a distinct perspective on fallenness and male identity, but while George Eliot's writing is singular and profound, I show that, like Dickens, her novel illustrates the ways that the patriarchal English community utilizes imperial power to discipline deviant female sexuality and produce normative behavior.¹³

Like *David Copperfield*, *Adam Bede* has a rather deceptive title that prepares readers for a text focused on one man and his experiences. The title and focus of Dickens's text, as I illustrated earlier, are undermined from the beginning as the novel's frontispiece and title page feature female characters rather than the "hero" of the story. Little Em'ly's popularity with Victorian readers also shows her importance in the novel and the way that fallen women garnered intense interest. The title page for *Adam Bede* also introduces readers to the fallen

¹³ While the article I published in *The Victorian* on *Adam Bede* entitled "Transgressive Sex and Punishment: Hetty Sorrel and the Penal Colony in *Adam Bede*" focuses primarily on the association between dangerous sex and imperialism, it does not feature the theoretical claim I make here about triangulation between patriarchy, female sexuality, and empire.

woman of the novel as it features several lines from William Wordsworth's long poem *The Excursion* (1814). Similar to the title page etching of Little Em'ly near the water, this epigraph complicates *Adam Bede*'s simple, eponymous title. The epigraph comes from the sixth book of the poem, "The Churchyard among the Mountains," and reads,

So that ye may have
Clear images before your gladdened eyes
Of nature's unambitious underwood
And flowers that prosper in the shade. And when
I speak of such among the flock as swerved
Or fell, those only shall be singled out
Upon whose lapse, or error, something more
Than brotherly forgiveness may attend. (651-8)

The speaker in the poem describes his subject matter and focus in these eight lines and says that he will reveal those flowers that grow "in the shade." These lines reflect the philosophy Eliot puts forward at the beginning of Book Second, "In Which The Story Pauses a Little," when the narrator pronounces the value in drawing an "unexaggerated lion" rather than a griffin and the value of writing about "everyday fellow-men" rather than beautiful women or heroes (*Adam Bede* 195, 197). Adam Bede, in this context, is a flower in the shade with whom Eliot wishes her readers would empathize. His name, referencing the earth's first man, hints that he will be a stand-in for any man and it hints that a relationship with a woman will be crucial to his story. The next five lines reference that character, the lost and fallen sheep, who will be discussed only when granted more than "brotherly forgiveness." The novel's title does not reference this lost sheep, but the epigraph hints at what is to come, and Hetty's early appearance here emphasizes

her important role in the text. She does not gain the sympathy of many readers, but she pushes Adam to become more sympathetic himself. Thus, while *David Copperfield* traced the development of a person from childhood to adulthood, *Adam Bede* traces a man's transformation from uncompromising to sympathetic towards others—what the narrator describes as a “growing tenderness which came from the sorrow at work within him” (531).

While Hetty's appearance on the title page highlights her crucial role in the text, I want to argue that this novel is about two men, Adam Bede and Arthur Donnithorne, and that Eliot uses Hetty to write about a male relationship. I do not mean to say that the women in the novel are not important; indeed, they play important roles, and Hetty's scandalous act of child-murder is unforgettable. What I do mean is that Eliot ultimately wants her readers to sympathize with these men, and her narrative shows how a male relationship in crisis threatens a whole community and how particular characters are disciplined in order to restore balance. This stance puts me in contention with E. J. Lawless who argues that “Even though critics focus on Adam Bede's suffering or Arthur Donnithorne's tragedy, this story is not theirs. It is, in fact, a story about women” (254). I agree with Lawless, as I discuss later, that Dinah becomes silenced in the text, but the structure and narrative perspective of the novel show that Eliot wants her readers to focus on these two men and that the primary female characters, Hetty and Dinah, are there to challenge and restore this male relationship. Eliot experiments with pairings in the novel, that of Hetty and Dinah, Adam and Arthur, but her primary site of exploration is what holds up the relationship of the two men. In the context of this dissertation, Eliot's work reveals how patriarchal structures, like the relationships between men, can become threatened but ultimately maintained, and here I show how that maintenance is made possible with Britain's imperial power.

The narrator's initial descriptions of Adam and Arthur underscore the connections between the two men and the ways they are at risk. The novel begins by focusing on Adam and his strength, and the descriptions of him in chapter one emphasize his superiority in comparison to other men. Although Eliot positions him as a relatable, "every-day fellow man," she also situates Adam as exceptional. He is "the tallest of the five workmen" and has a "strong baritone" that "could only come from a broad chest" that

belonged to a large-boned muscular man nearly six feet high, with a back so flat and a head so well poised that when he drew himself up to take a more distant survey of his work, he had the air of a soldier standing at ease. The sleeve rolled up above the elbow showed an arm that was likely to win the prize for feats of strength; yet the long supple hand, with its broad finger-tips, looked ready for works of skill. (*Adam Bede* 10)

The narrator later says that Adam "was by no means a marvellous man, nor, properly speaking, a genius" but "He was not an average man" (231, 232). These descriptions of Adam balance his ordinary qualities with his irregular ones and connect him with David Copperfield. Like David, born with both good and bad luck, Adam is a liminal figure, both exceptional and regular. Dickens begins *David Copperfield* with readers being uncertain about David's ability to be the hero of his life. Here we are confident in Adam's exceptional strength but also wonder if it will be enough in the face of loss and heartbreak. This liminality matters because it marks both Adam and David as characters who are at-risk. They might succeed or they might fail, so their positions in the social order are not yet nailed down.

The first detailed description of Arthur reveals a similar liminality in his position. The narrator describes his appearance when he comes to visit Mr. Irwine in Chapter 5:

The young gentleman was Arthur Donnithorne, known in Hayslope, variously, as ‘the young squire,’ ‘the heir,’ and ‘the captain.’ He was only a captain in the Loamshire Militia; but to the Hayslope tenants he was more intensely a captain than all the young gentlemen of the same rank in his Majesty’s regulars—he outshone them as the planet Jupiter outshines the Milky Way. If you want to know more particularly how he looked, call to your remembrance some tawny-whiskered, brown-locked, clear-complexioned young Englishman whom you have met with in a foreign town, and been proud of as a fellow-countryman—well-washed, high-bred, white-handed, yet looking as if he could deliver well from the left shoulder, and floor his man. (68)

Like Adam, Arthur is both regular and extraordinary. He is “only a captain,” one of many, but in Hayslope, he is *the* captain, likened to Jupiter, the largest planet in the solar system. Arthur is also common in his appearance in that he is like a well-groomed Englishman in a foreign town, he resembles many men who engender pride in their countrymen.

Eliot crafts these characters as both plain and sophisticated, typical and rare, and these disparate qualities help form the basis of the men’s relationship. They come from very different backgrounds and classes, but they are able to connect because each man sees the multifaceted nature of the other. Adam respects Arthur as a superior, but he also relates to him in a frank matter that recognizes the captain’s deeper feelings. Similarly, Arthur recognizes Adam’s common nature but respects the man’s work and sense of duty. Furthermore, their connection is a productive one that keeps the community stable and the estate well managed. If they continue on their destined paths, Hayslope will benefit from their labor and the order they provide to the community.

The best evidence that this novel is primarily concerned with these two men comes in Chapter 27, “The Crisis,” when Adam discovers Arthur and Hetty in the woods. First, the narrator describes how Adam thinks of Arthur: “And he had no ideal world of dead heroes; he knew little of the life of men in the past; he must find the beings to whom he could cling with loving admiration among those who came within speech of him. These pleasant thoughts about Arthur brought a milder expression than usual into his keen rough face” (323). Here we see the importance of the bond between these men and what is at risk to crumble upon Adam’s discovery. Adam has no man to idolize, no hero from history or fiction, but he has a noble ally in Arthur with whom he can work to build a better life for himself and the community. What Hetty thus threatens to destroy in this novel is the productive partnership of Adam and Arthur. Their relationship brings stability to Hayslope and promises to be productive for years to come until this illicit romance with Hetty.

Although Hetty does not deserve all of the blame for this affair, the narrator subtly pushes readers to sympathize with Arthur rather than with Hetty. The descriptions of the two throughout the novel reveal a bias in Arthur’s favor. The novel frequently underscores Hetty’s vanity and lack of depth. She is more like a small animal than a person, she is “childish,” “baby-like,” a “self-engrossed” and “devout” worshipper of her own image, she does not have the vocabulary to understand a novel, her “dreams were all of luxuries,” she has a “little silly imagination,” and is “as unsympathetic as butterflies sipping nectar” (175, 166, 154, 164, 148, 109, 110, 111). Even when Arthur shatters Hetty’s expectations and her struggle temporarily becomes the focus of the text, the novel still resists a sympathetic reading of her. The narrator describes the beginning of her journey to find Arthur in Windsor and acknowledges her desperate state but still devalues her suffering:

A long, lonely journey, with sadness in the heart; away from the familiar to the strange; that is a hard and dreary thing even to the rich, the strong, the instructed: a hard thing, even when we are called by duty, not urged by dread.

What was it then to Hetty? With her poor narrow thoughts, no longer melting into vague hopes, but pressed upon by the chill of definite fear; repeating again and again the same small round of memories—shaping again and again the same childish, doubtful images of what was to come—seeing nothing in this wide world but the little history of her own pleasures and pains. (401)

Here again, the narrator highlights her ignorance and vanity—these characteristics are highlighted more than any others that Hetty possesses—and when a landlord begins to feel for her saying, “I never saw a prettier young woman in my life...She’s like a picture in a shop-winder. It goes to one’s ‘cart to look at her,” his wife immediately responds, “It ‘ud been a good deal better for her if she’d been uglier and had more conduct” (409-10). This moment illustrates how readers are brought close to feeling for Hetty and then are reminded of what makes her unlikable. The pitiable descriptions of Hetty are thus paired repeatedly with descriptions of her ignorance and vanity. Moreover, the narrator describes his own pity for the wandering girl saying, “My heart bleeds for her as I see her toiling along her weary feet, or seated in a car, with her eyes fixed vacantly on the road,” but even this gesture towards sympathy is tempered when he concludes the description by telling the reader, “God preserve you and me from being the beginners of such misery!” (423). In other words, the girl suffers, but think of those who caused the suffering. Turn your attention, reader, to those who created this trouble.

The narrator describes the principal creator of this trouble, Arthur, in much more sympathetic terms. Arthur is not wholly ignorant or vain but complex. He has “candour,” “an

agreeable confidence that his faults were all of a generous kind,” he is “uneasy,” “uncomfortable,” self-reflective and “dissatisfied with himself, irritated, mortified,” and he hopes that good will “come out of evil” (135, 145, 150, 151, 342). Arthur time and again swears off Hetty, plans to stop seeing her, but her beauty and her tears pull him back, and he repeatedly goes against his best intentions and continues his relationship with her. Although readers might criticize Arthur for his weakness and ability to take advantage of Hetty, the text still pushes us to refrain from judgement against him. After describing one of his early intentions to avoid Hetty, the narrator warns the reader that “we have no fair ground for entertaining unfavourable auguries concerning Arthur Donnithorne, who this morning proves himself capable of a prudent resolution founded on conscience” (137). Furthermore, Adam, *who does judge* Arthur harshly, is brought into a more compassionate stance by Mr. Irwine, who pushes Adam to refrain from confronting Arthur and demanding suffering from him. Adam becomes furious that Arthur does not yet know about Hetty, her journey, and her crime, but Mr. Irwine responds, “Adam, he *will* know—he *will* suffer, long and bitterly. He has a heart and a conscience: I can’t be entirely deceived in his character. I am convinced—I am sure he didn’t fall under temptation without a struggle. He may be weak, but he is not callous, not coldly selfish” (459). Like the wife who tempers her husband’s pity for Hetty, Mr. Irwine tempers Adam’s judgement of Arthur telling him that Arthur does not have those qualities which the narrator has convinced us that Hetty has: insensitivity and selfishness. To put it another way, the text acknowledges and shows that Arthur is weak, but, from the narrator’s perspective, that makes him a more pitiable character than the one who is ignorant and vain.

Eliot develops Hetty’s character enough for her action of child murder to seem believable. We have access to Hetty’s motivations and struggles, vain as they may be, up until

this tragic act, which, like the central scandal of *David Copperfield*, happens offscreen and becomes communicated to the protagonist and reader through another character. Once the crime is committed and Hetty is in prison and charged, the text concerns itself wholly with Adam, Dinah, and Arthur and their responses to her crime and the trial. Hetty's deviancy affects many people, the Poysers, Adam, Mr. Irwine, Arthur, and Dinah, but Eliot focuses on the damage done to Adam and Arthur. While both Arthur and Hetty behave badly, she is the one whose purity must be intact in order for her to fit into the patriarchal social order, and she is the one who pays the ultimate cost. Mr. Irwine warns Arthur of this when he talks to him about admiring her; he says, "I have no objection to your contemplating Hetty in an artistic light, but I must not have you feeding her vanity, and filling her little noddle with the notion that she's a great beauty, attractive to fine gentlemen, or you will spoil her for a poor man's wife" (111-2). Arthur, of course, does just that, and Hetty and her position are irrevocably damaged as a result. Adam makes clear in his reprimanding of Arthur that he took advantage of her and made promises that he knew he would not keep, but as I have tried to show, the text still pushes us to connect with and pity Arthur's weakness rather than Hetty's naivety. Hetty makes public Arthur's weakness and shows how even strong relationships between men can disintegrate.

Thus, the triangulation of patriarchy, female sexuality, and empire I have theorized becomes visible in the last two books of Eliot's novel. The most obvious point on this triangle is Hetty and her deviant behavior, which Eliot rolls out to its seemingly furthest point. Hetty does not just sleep with a man outside of marriage, she also desires a man beyond her station; she not only becomes pregnant, but she also kills her child in a horrible scene of despair in which Hetty intentionally buries the baby but is so haunted by its crying she returns to look for it, too late to save it.

Adam and Arthur occupy that other point of the triangle because their relationship to each other, their happiness and productivity directly affects the community. Arthur, now an adult and now having inherited the estate, is the foundation of patriarchal patronage in Hayslope and Adam in his role as manager and right-hand man supports Arthur in his maintenance of the estate. We see how society becomes threatened through Arthur's weakness and Hetty's deviancy when after the trial, the Bedes and the Poysers decide that the best thing to do is leave their homes and start a new life somewhere else. All of these folks, the Donnithornes, the Bedes, and the Poysers, can no longer live alongside each other in peace and without disgrace. The illicit relationship that eventually results in Hetty's crime has not only hurt Adam personally, but it has also ripped apart this rural society. In this sense, it has economic and geographical consequences as well as emotional ones.

The British Empire, as I have argued, helps to mitigate the repercussions of this disintegrating relationship between patriarchy and female sexuality in Hayslope. The solutions that Arthur puts forward are made possible by Britain's foreign policy and imperial holdings. Arthur is not able to get a full pardon for Hetty, she cannot return to her family and home, but he is able to keep her from dying at the scaffold, a move that redeems him, to some degree, or at least underscores again Eliot's desire that readers see him in a sympathetic light.¹⁴ Hetty does

¹⁴ One lingering question for readers of *Adam Bede* is why Eliot chooses to spare Hetty's life in this dramatic pardon scene only to have her still suffer and die as a convict overseas. Bruce K. Martin argues that "Like Adam's marriage, then, the rescue of Hetty, far from reflecting a whim or arbitrary decision by the author, contributes to the novel's unity. It is a means by which George Eliot can get Hetty out of the reader's way once she has served her purpose of unwittingly changing Adam, yet avoid the pathos which would attend an execution and divert the

die as a result of her punishment, but she does so away from the audience's view, so Arthur is able to appear sacrificial and heroic at the end of the novel while Hetty remains punished and loses her life without gaining the sympathy of readers. Hetty's disappearance from the text and the community is the first step towards rebalancing the world of the novel as it assures that Adam and Arthur will no longer be threatened by temptation, weakness, and deviancy. In addition, Arthur seeks to re-establish stability by joining the army and leaving Hayslope so that the Bedes and Poysers do not have to give up their homes in order to avoid him. A military position offers him an exit from this domestic conflict and an opportunity to "prevent any further injury to others" (507).

The departures of Hetty and Arthur allow the Bedes and Poysers room to recover. They are able to remain in their homes, and although they are forever changed, they begin to heal. Adam becomes a more tender brother to Seth and experiences a "transformation of pain into sympathy" (532). One change that has puzzled critics about the ending of *Adam Bede* is the shift in Dinah and Adam's relationship eighteen months after Hetty's transportation and Arthur's departure. While their romance seems to blossom quickly, the triangular model I have put forward as an illustration of the relationship between patriarchy, female sexuality, and empire makes room for this kind of character development in that Dinah, deviant in her own way as a woman who does not desire marriage but wants to serve God through preaching and service. What we see in Dinah and Adam's coming together is their adoption of normative behavior. Dinah makes "great advances in household cleverness" and begins to seriously consider marriage and building a life with Adam different than what she had planned (535). Together, she and

reader's attention from Adam" (762). This perspective supports my contention that Eliot uses Hetty to affect Adam.

Adam make right what Hetty and Arthur made wrong, and their relationship is the expressed result of that wrong. As Adam reflects, “It’s like what I feel about Dinah: I should never ha’ come to know that her love ‘ud be the greatest o’ blessings to me, if what I counted a blessing hadn’t been wrenched and torn away from me, and left me with a greater need, so as I could crave and hunger for a greater and a better comfort” (561). Eliot’s description of their coming together even echoes that of Hetty and Arthur; Dinah and Adam “approach each other gradually, like two little quivering rainstreams, before they mingle into one” (537). In my analysis of *David Copperfield*, I argued that the tension between patriarchy and female sexuality is a productive one in that it engenders normative behavior. In *Adam Bede*, Dinah and Adam’s marriage is the product of that tension as Dinah decides to enter fully into family life with Adam. The woman who Arthur Donnithorne says he “could worship” gives up preaching “all but talking to the people a bit in their houses” and decides to “set th’ example o’ submitting” (512, 589). One might argue that, in Foucault’s terms, Hetty and Arthur are punished while Dinah and Adam are disciplined and that the novel’s ending is seems happy and liberating only by comparison to the alternative. Like David Copperfield who, though disciplined, seems free in comparison with fallen women like Em’ly and Martha, Dinah and Adam seem free to live as they like when compared to Hetty the convict and Arthur the soldier. Therefore, although these two novels differ significantly, the ways they connect sexual deviancy and empire reveal a close relationship that should not be ignored.

4 **COMPETING NARRATIVES OF FALLENNESS, DISEASE, AND EMPIRE**

May we find, as ages run,
The mother featured in the son;
And may yours for ever be
That old strength and constancy
Which has made your fathers great
In our ancient island State,

And wherever her flag fly,
 Glorifying between sea and sky,
 Makes the might of Britain known;
 Britons, hold your own!

Alfred, Lord Tennyson, "Opening of the Indian and
 Colonial Exhibition by the Queen"

Tennyson's patriotic poem refraining "Britons, hold your own!" subtly reveals the important role of women in the British Empire. "May we find, as ages run," the speaker begins, "The mother featured in the son" (11-12). The sons of Empire, so crucial to the maintenance of Britain's international power, carry the legacy of their mothers. If these women fall, refuse motherhood, or pass on diseases to their offspring, they place those men, "the might of Britain," at risk (19).¹⁵ In the previous two chapters, I have made visible the triangulation of patriarchy, female sexuality, and empire in novels from the first half of the Victorian period by challenging critical conceptions of the fallen woman as a trope of domestic fiction whose position as outcast

¹⁵ Eliza Lynn Linton describes this imperial connection between women and their sons in "Nearing the Rapids" (1894). She writes, "As mothers they build up the body and give the first impress to the mind of the child. What they are in health and morality, reacts on the health and morality of their offspring; and the rule of the nursery by its food, its teaching, its governance, lays the foundations of a man's wholesome physique or unserviceable nerves." Linton goes on to emphasize how powerful this makes women, calling them "the queens of society" (378). While she describes women as incredibly powerful as wives and mothers, she does so to argue that women do not need more power. In particular, they do not need the right to vote. Linton's position is both empowering and limiting; she details the variety of ways that women influence society while also advocating for limits on that influence. Her emphasis on the power women have on their children, however, does highlight women's key role in the empire building that begins with young boys in their nurseries.

illustrates the stigmatization of female sex during the nineteenth century. I have argued that the depiction and punishment of fallen women reveal an interest in protecting and maintaining an imperial system. As my study moves into the latter part of the age, however, and as the size and influence of the British Empire expands, the connections between fallenness and empire become more explicit and less reliant on careful explication to expose their interdependent relationship. Therefore, my approach in this chapter shifts from revealing the imperial undertones of fiction seemingly far-removed from colonial interests to referencing and evaluating texts in which fallenness and imperialism—in this case military strength—are openly discussed and debated. In the following pages, I show how the British worked to maintain their sense of superiority, a foundational belief of imperialism, through the regulation of female bodies in the late nineteenth century and the ways that Josephine Butler and Sarah Grand depict women as innocent victims of morally corrupt men who threaten the Empire's "strength and constancy" (14). These competing narratives, those that describe the fallen woman as site of contagion and those that describe the fallen woman as betrayed victim, illustrate the ways that the female body became a point of contention not only in domestic gender politics but also in the maintenance of imperial power. As I show, debates over whether the fallen body should be regulated frequently hinged on one's evaluation of the woman as victim of male power or as malicious propagator of disease and degeneration.

Public discussion of fallen women, sex, and empire ballooned with the passage and enforcement of the Contagious Diseases Acts (CD Acts), which initially were designed to limit the spread of venereal disease among the British military and then expanded to become

significant pieces of social regulation affecting a broader swath of the population.¹⁶ The contentious debates regarding these laws aptly depict the moral panic surrounding deviant female sexuality, and they reveal the ironic role the fallen woman played in imperial ideology as she was both a threat to empire and, based on the logic of the laws, necessary for its maintenance. Furthermore, they show how many Britons coupled sexual morality with national strength and understood how deviant sexuality was both a natural part of the imperial project and a risk factor that endangered Britain's dominance. Sexual deviancy was a "natural" part of imperialism in male-dominated colonies where the presence of British women was extremely limited. In these environments, prostitution and concubinage could become a norm not tolerated in polite, English society. Sexual relationships with native women, however, put the empire at risk because the production of mixed-race children mocked the supposed racial divisions between colonizer and colonized.¹⁷ Similarly, in England, sexual deviancy was natural in military stations where prostitution, as I will discuss later, was considered by many a necessary evil. This deviancy, like sexual relationships with native women in the colony, however, also put the empire at risk by threatening men with disease. While this does not make British fallen women and native women equal, it does mean that they occupied the same cultural position—an inherently ambivalent position since the two groups of women were both desired and feared. Regulations regarding sex and sexuality in the British Empire were complicated and far-reaching and "between the 1850s

¹⁶ I follow historian Philippa Levine in using the "older term *venereal disease*, or *venereal diseases* rather than the contemporary term, *sexually transmissible diseases*...since this is the historically specific term used at the time" (*Prostitution, Race, and Politics* 331).

¹⁷ For further discussion of these issues, see the "Gender and Sexuality" chapter of Levine, *The British Empire: Sunrise to Sunset*.

and the 1880s, British colonial administrators established wide-ranging legislation to stem the growing tide of VD and the attendant loss of soldier-power it entailed” (Levine, *Prostitution, Race, and Politics* 1). Here I focus primarily on their domestic implementation and the protests against them because they expose the ways Britons saw themselves in the world and mark the development of their imperial identity. Additionally, it would be difficult to accurately describe and analyze the policies regarding sex and sexuality across the British Empire in the space afforded here without overgeneralizing or equating a collection of colonial sites with different histories, ethnic groups, and systems of rule.¹⁸

4.1 Medicine and Morality: The CD Acts as Public Health Initiative and Moral

Grounding of Imperialism

Regulation of sex in the British Empire varied based on location, rates of disease, and the conditions of interaction with native peoples, but the CD Acts implemented in Great Britain were more uniform. The first piece of legislation was a sanitary measure focused on the military, their infection rates, and their subsequent “loss of man-hours” (Walkowitz 72). Most soldiers and sailors were restricted or discouraged from marrying, so disease rates were higher in this population than in the general public. This fact brings into focus the relationship between the security of patriarchal institutions and empire since the unique life of soldiers and sailors in the service of empire threatened imperial strength and their very lives. According to Judith R. Walkowitz, “By 1864, one of three sick cases in the army were venereal in origin” (49). These high rates meant that venereal diseases among the army and navy were not only a health issue

¹⁸ For an in-depth study of the variety of policies concerning venereal diseases and the sex industry across Britain’s imperial holdings, see Philippa Levine, *Prostitution, Race, and Politics: Policing Venereal Disease in the British Empire*.

but a fiscal one as well since treatment was costly and frequently ineffective thus necessitating long hospital stays or return visits. A cure for syphilis was yet to be found, and the prevailing wisdom was to use mercury in treatment. Periods of good health while still carrying the disease also made syphilis difficult to successfully eradicate or treat. Additionally, “the very diverse array of conditions” caused by the late stages of syphilis meant that illnesses were not necessarily attributed to an earlier infection of this venereal disease (Hall 481). The condition of the nation’s standing army and navy was of serious concern in an age of global interaction, expansion, and conflict. Harriet Martineu, an opponent of the 1864 law, admitted that “all thoughtful and patriotic people must feel the deepest concern and alarm about the present state and future prospects of the public health and morals” (77).¹⁹ These diseases threatened the wellbeing of thousands of men on whom Britain relied for protection. “Soldiers,” Philippa Levine writes, “were regarded as the ultimate defenders of the Empire, the force which, if and when resistance erupted, was called upon: they were the face and the frame of imperial masculinity, the final enforcers of rule through brute force” (*The British Empire* 164). Accordingly, these final enforcers needed to be strong and reliable rather than diminished by

¹⁹ Martineu goes on to argue in this piece that rather than pass this law and begin to quarantine citizens at the expense of the state, the military would be better off working to prevent “the vice and the disease” by giving enlisted men more to do. She writes, “Our young soldiers have not enough to do; and what they have to do is irksome...no provision made for the rational and profitable occupation and pleasant recreation of the soldiers, the whole world of licence is thrown open to men wearied with idleness, desperate with dullness, and craving the relief and luxury of jollity” (80, 81). She also argues for the suppression of brothels and punishment of its “abbettors” (81).

disease. Regulating these men would suggest that they were at fault, that they had weaknesses that endangered the empire. The fallen woman, then, became the focus of regulatory action and reform because it was already established that she was weak and dangerous not unlike the native women being subjected to regulation in the colonies.

Since syphilis was difficult to identify and combat after exposure, military leaders and health experts turned their attention to prevention. Rather than limit or challenge the behavior of military men, however, leaders began to craft policies that would regulate the behavior of women. Thus, here again, we see women become the recipients of disciplinary action when the behavior and character of men garner scrutiny. Those who promoted the CD Acts saw prostitution as a necessary evil, of sorts. According to early supporters of the legislation, “Only the exceptional conditions of military life, requiring the effective ‘celibacy’ of enlisted men, justified state protection of sexual promiscuity” (Walkowitz 72). The first two acts, those of 1864 and 1866, were specific to a selection of military towns and targeted women as carriers of venereal diseases and ignored the disease-spreading ability of men in that the laws applied to women exclusively. Ironically, by the time the laws were enacted and the topic of state-sanctioned prostitution was in the public eye, syphilis rates were actually declining (Levine, *Prostitution, Race, and Politics* 5 and Weeks 85). The acts, though seemingly passed in response to a medical and fiscal need, should accordingly be considered as a response to a *perceived* threat of women whose sexual deviance polluted and undermined civilized society. Even though fallenness and prostitution were seen as major problems across the country, this desire to protect military men first and foremost illustrates a keen interest in protecting the imperial system. Maria Luddy offers a concise description of the three laws:

There was no legal definition of a “prostitute” in the nineteenth century and all that was needed for a conviction was for a policeman to swear before a magistrate that he had seen the woman solicit a man. The magistrate then issued a summons for the woman to be medically examined at a certified hospital. If the woman refused then she could be imprisoned for two months. If a woman underwent the examination and was discovered to suffer from a venereal disease then she was detained in hospital for up to three months. In 1866 the detention period in hospital was extended to six months and then to nine months in 1869 when there were 18 subjected districts. (416)

The 1869 law also extended “the jurisdiction of the Acts to a ten-mile radius of the districts in which they operated; enforced fortnightly examinations upon all known prostitutes...required the detention of women who were unfit for examination (menstruating)...provided for the moral and religious instruction of the women confined,” and “made the acts effective for an indefinite period” (Bell 57, Walkowitz 86). As Nancy Boyd explains, while these laws increased the government’s involvement in the private lives of citizens, “If it was a matter of choosing between the health of the Armed Services, the dedicated and heroic men who had made Britain the strongest country in Europe, and the civil rights of prostitutes, the choice was clear” (41).

The manner in which these laws were enforced highlights the cultural imperative that I have underscored in this work as a whole: the imperative to discipline fallen women when the status of men and the power of empire become threatened. The enforcement of these laws was an enormous undertaking since it required a host of new offices and bureaucracies to handle identifying, examining, quarantining, and reforming sex workers. In this sense, the CD Acts were unique among Victorian reforms since they did not prohibit a particular activity or

institution like child labor or debtor's prisons. Rather, they regulated a trade called by many the "great social evil" and "created new medical institutions and a new relationship between private voluntary hospitals and the state" (Walkowitz 72).²⁰ This expansion of government in the name of public health illustrates the intense desire and dedication on the part of supporters to solve the issue of military strength, prostitution, and disease. It also shows how imperial concerns required a different set of governing principles. While progressive reforms might serve as a point of moral superiority to other nations, a sign of reflection, regret, and devotion to a more humane way of life, policies regarding British power abroad did not embody this kind of progressivism, and I would argue that this disconnect stems primarily from the racist ideology at the heart of the imperial project. Progressive reforms might be embraced at home, but entrenchment might be needed abroad in order to delineate clearly between the colonizer and the colonized. The passage of the CD Acts also shows how this entrenched ideology spread into English society at points when Britain's imperial power seemed threatened.

Protecting imperial power required a host of rationales that upheld the notion of British superiority. As the jurisdiction of these laws expanded and supporters encouraged their implementation across Britain, proponents had to rationalize the need for regulation outside of the military since the civilian population did not have the same restrictions on their ability to marry and enter heteronormative relationships. Supporters then pointed to the infection rates in England's large cities, highlighted the successes of the CD Acts up to that point, and advocated for the law's expansion in the service of public health. One rhetorical tool used by supporters was to reference the risk that these diseases posed to the whole of British society. For example,

²⁰ See Walkowitz for a discussion of the bureaucratic apparatuses founded as a result of this legislation (including a medical police force).

The Association for Promoting the Extension of the Contagious Diseases Acts published a report in 1868 in which it portrayed the extent of the threat:

It must not be supposed that venereal disease is limited to the poorest and most destitute of the vicious class; its effects are more terrible to them on account of their helplessness, but the disease affects sooner or later most women who permit indiscriminate intercourse, and from them it is unhappily carried into the families of all ranks and stations. (8)

From this perspective, sexually deviant women place British families at risk. As the Association makes clear, some of the individuals most at risk to fall victim are children who inherit the disease from their mothers. One of its five stated goals is to “impress upon the public the necessity of regarding the venereal disease as a contagious disease of the gravest character, which is constantly transmitted from parent to offspring; and proposes to remove those affected with it from opportunity of propagating their disorder” (5). This child-protection argument was rhetorically effective in communicating the danger of syphilis to innocent kids who were innocent victims of the foolish decisions of their parents, and it echoes the sentiment expressed in the Tennyson poem I discussed at the beginning of the chapter. This child-protection stance acts inherently to protect imperial power since Britain’s dominance in the world relies on its boys and the “mother[s] featured in the son[s]” (Tennyson 11-12). Thus, fallen women, who are likely through their “indiscriminate” behavior to contract a contagious disease, place the protectors of the empire at risk and therefore threaten Britain’s power.

The argument about future generations and syphilis was also taken up by social scientists concerned about the destiny of the British people, and their argument was inherently concerned with imperial power as well as fears about racial degeneration. At a meeting of the National

Association for the Promotion of Social Sciences, for instance, Berkeley Hill spoke in favor of the CD Acts' expansion to the civil population saying,

Those killed by an epidemic cease to burden society, and their places are soon occupied; but a chronic endemic disease, not only incapacitates its victims, but throws the cost of their maintenance on the healthy; and here Health Returns fail to inform us of the amount of *continual* sickness among the population, and still more to define the position of contagious disease among the disabling afflictions of humanity. In endeavouring to appreciate this, we must not forget that syphilis is eminently a disease that impedes the development and lowers the vitality of the individual, and consequently deteriorates the vigour of the stock. (430)

Hill's illustration of syphilis's consequences draws upon the vocabulary of degeneration and eugenics as he calls children with syphilis "enfeebled offspring" and as he callously remarks that people who die from "an epidemic" no longer "burden society" (430). In his view, illicit sexual acts and the diseases they foster can harm children, weaken the race, and cost healthy people money. Thus, fears about the wellbeing of children in regard to venereal disease were not only driven by medical data, but they were also prompted by fears about race weakening and extinction.²¹

In Britain's colonies, concerns about women, diseases, and racial degeneration frequently went hand in hand. One book published on this topic entitled *Our Plague Spot in Connection with our Polity and Usages, as Regards our Women, our Soldiery, and the Indian Empire*

²¹ See Levine, "Anthropology, Colonialism, and Eugenics" for a description of the ways that evolutionary theory, eugenics, and colonialism influenced one another and laid the groundwork for eugenics to become more mainstream in the twentieth century.

advocates for the promotion of marriage among the military and the British working in the colonies in order to combat sexual promiscuity and the spread of disease. The anonymous author expresses frustrated confusion at the policy on this issue. He writes,

Does GOD create in vain? Can it be possible to conceive that in a nation like ours any rulers could remain so blind or callous to human wrongs, as to send tens of thousands of the finest young men to our colonies and debar them from lawful wedlock, whilst such a mass of young women are left behind to become corrupted and depraved—preying on the vitals of the nation—and causing the expenditure of millions sterling every year. (255)

His complaint points to the interdependent relationship of patriarchy, female sexuality, and empire. From his perspective, the prohibition against marriage threatens “the finest young men” by separating the sexes from each other and leaving women to become both victim and menace. She is left behind, unable to marry the fine men who have left England’s shores, but she is also the purveyor of contagion, “preying on the vitals of the nation” and costing the public money.

The writer goes on to illustrate how this marriage doctrine further endangers the English in India as he describes the ways gender, sexuality, and race intersect in that context:

It has been objected to the writer, that any number of Europeans that we could send to India, would, in a few years, become absorbed in the native population; as was the case with the Portuguese in early times, such descendants as a general rule, being an inferior race of people. *But English are not Portuguese*—and we think the class of persons proposed to be sent out would be the last to prefer a black to a white, unless driven to it by some imperious necessity of temperament and by a decided, as now with our Soldiery in India, *manque de miuex*.

Moreover, organized as suggested, *each man taking his own wife with him*, with a surplus of women to meet casualties, and a restriction,—upon pain of forfeiture of a renewal of grant to any heirs produced by intermarriage with a native *or any illegitimate offspring whatever*,—would soon check this, *and vice*. (374)

The author proposes that English men will not allow for their race to become inferior if they have access to English women. These men will only stoop to relationships with inferior Indian women if there is a *manqué de mieux*, “lack of better.” Here again the behavior and decisions of men are not to be altered—it is the number of women and access to them that should be changed. In the previous chapter I argued that empire acted as an alleviating force between patriarchy and deviant women. In the colonial context illustrated here, English women are mitigating actors whose presence upholds racist doctrine in that their relationships with men reduce the risk that these men will produce weak offspring with native, “inferior” women. The author also references English exceptionalism, claiming that while the Portuguese were absorbed into the native population, the English would not stoop to choose black over white. To further incentivize monogamy, he proposes financial restrictions on potential native heirs to English money. His argument lacks sound reasoning, though, since there would be no need for financial restrictions if English men never lowered themselves and had sexual relationships with native women.

While *Our Plague Spot* specifically addresses how health, morality, and sexuality should work together to maintain English supremacy in India, the text is not unique in linking these pieces together when debating prostitution and disease. Even writers unconcerned with life outside of England frequently coupled medicine and morality to make claims about national or racial strength placed at risk by venereal disease. Indeed, the regulation of prostitution in the

nineteenth century was a scientific product as well as a cultural one designed to protect the heart of empire and its citizens. Elizabeth Fee, a scholar of health policy, in writing about venereal disease in the twentieth century and the parallels between syphilis and AIDS, claims that

Ways of perceiving and understanding disease are historically constructed. Our social, political, religious, and moral conceptions influence our perceptions of disease, just as do different scientific and medical theories. Indeed, these different elements often cannot be easily separated, as scientists and physicians bring their own cultural ideas to bear in the construction of scientific theories. Because these cultural ideas may be widely shared, their presence within medical and scientific theory may not be readily apparent. Often, such cultural conceptions are more obvious when reviewing medical and scientific theories of the past than they are in contemporary medical practice. (449)

Certainly during the AIDS crisis, homophobic views fueled public response to the disease and shaped medical discourse and public policy. As Elaine Showalter writes, “both syphilis and AIDS have been interpreted as the inevitable outcome of the violation of ‘natural’ sex laws,” which are culturally constructed rather than biologically determined (190). Both diseases during historical moments of panic served as symbols for the degenerate and morally bankrupt, so while the CD Acts were an important series of public health initiatives enacted in response to a literal need, they were also passed in response to a figurative dilemma: How could Britain symbolically and literally signal the country’s value of national strength and sexual morality while also preserving male power? The passage and enforcement of the CD Acts reveal that the regulation of sexual deviance via the female body was preferred to the eradication of prostitution or the limitation of male sexuality. The central irony of these laws, of course, is that they

condone sexual promiscuity while also claiming that their implementation illustrates dedication to social purity. Under the CD Acts, the fallen woman herself becomes an ironic figure, as she is both a threat to empire and, based on the logic of the laws, necessary for its maintenance.

British imperialism in the late nineteenth century relied increasingly on an ideology of racial and moral superiority. While a sense of European authority certainly fueled colonialism from its start, the rationalization for British imperialism took on a more deeply entrenched racial and moral perspective following the Indian Revolt or Mutiny of 1857.²² In *The Oxford History of the British Empire*, John M. Mackenzie writes that the conflict

was seen as a great moral watershed, a defining moment of Empire when it faced its greatest test and survived. It also contributed to a progressive heightening of racial attitudes in Imperial culture. The murders of white women and children

²² This bloody conflict in Indian and British history goes by many names including the Indian Rebellion, India's First War of Independence, the Great Rebellion, and the Uprising of 1857, among others. The name "Indian Mutiny," widely used in Britain during the nineteenth century, certainly betrays a political perspective that views the rebels as without just cause in their fighting. Another factor in increasing racial rationalization for imperialism was the application of Darwin's ideas to societies. Timothy Parsons writes that "Britain's shift to formal empire in the late nineteenth century was abetted by shifting social attitudes that made it easier to conquer and administer non-European populations. In imperial circles, the evangelical zeal of the missionary movement was drowned out by Social Darwinism and pseudoscientific racism. Although Charles Darwin did not apply his theory of natural selection and evolution to human societies, the publication of *The Origin of Species* in 1859 had a profound influence on imperialist thought" (25).

were particularly shocking to Victorian sensibilities. The Mutiny appeared not only to call forth exemplary heroism, but also to indicate that Indians had rejected policies of Western assimilation. (280)

The title page engraving from Sir Colin Campbell's *Narrative of the Indian Revolt: From Its Outbreak to the Capture of Lucknow* (1858) accentuates the horror expressed by Britons at the deaths of British women and children (see Figure 4.1). While any other of the "numerous engravings from authentic sketches" could have been used to open the book, the selection of this illustration reveals that the violence enacted against women and children was the primary source of moral outrage for the book's British audience. The engraving shows only one white man, who is tied to a tree, and a white boy, who struggles underneath the sword of an Indian soldier. The remainder of the British depicted are women and girls scattered across the engraving under various stages of attack. On the left side, one woman against the front of the besieged building looks to be the victim of sexual assault; while next to her, a young girl falls into the crowd of mutineers; and beneath her, a soldier steps on the body of a young girl. Near the lone British man, two women plead with their gun-wielding attackers, and up on the porch of the building, a woman clutches her infant in fear and turns to escape. While British women and children did die during this conflict, choosing this engraving as the primary representation of the rebellion reveals how British responses to the revolt were tinged with moral outrage and how imperial policy and culture would afterwards shift in order to accommodate this sentiment.

British women in the colonies guarded against miscegenation and measured morality; if they were treated poorly by natives, it would indicate British superiority. Following reports of massacres in India, the British Empire could define itself against the immorality and duplicity of Indian men who took up arms against their British commanders and this self-defining process

took place in the colony and the capital. The British, from this perspective, were morally superior, benevolent rulers whose presence overseas signalled progress and the possibilities of prosperity. The development of this ideology not only affected colonial sites across the globe, but it also created a framework for how seemingly disparate aspects of British society supported the aims of empire building. Lynda Nead describes the watershed moment of 1857 as being “a perception of crisis of empire” in which

the history of imperialism, definitions of empire and definitions of morality were intricately interwoven; during a period of imperial crisis the danger and fear could be realized in terms of social and sexual behaviour and, conversely, regulation of sexuality could be articulated in relation to its effects on nation and empire.

Questions of military needs, empire and colonial trade could easily be reframed as issues of morality, health and national strength. (84)



Figure 4.1 “The Massacre at Delhi,” Narrative of the Indian Revolt: From its Outbreak to the Capture of Lucknow, 1858.

Furthermore, Nead writes, imperial “expansion was validated in terms of the moral values which, it was claimed, would be generated from the mother country....The Christian family home was

the basic unit of the nation, and order and regulation at home were thus believed to be essential for success and expansion abroad. The significance of moral and sexual behaviour is evident in this formation of imperialist ideology” (83). Therefore, if moral values became central in imperial discourse and practice at this time, and if these morals were “generated from the mother country,” then normative female sexuality in Britain contributed to the “success” and “expansion” of the Empire.

Likewise, deviant female sexuality affected the strength and security of the British Empire. “Woman,” according to Nead, “was believed to play a central role in the formation of public morality; she was responsible for the purity of the home, and private morality was the source and index of public morality. The moral condition of the nation, therefore, was believed to derive from the moral standards of woman” (92). Fallen women who did not live up to the moral standard, especially those during this period who were perceived to be dangerous carriers of disease, threatened the future of their “dominant” race and weakened soldiers and sailors infected by their sexual acts. A population debilitated by venereal disease did not embody the kind of moral superiority required to uphold doctrines of global eminence. As Levine writes,

Unrestrained sexuality was an unending threat to Empire; it undermined notions of British moderation and rationality, it produced inter racial liaisons and sometimes offspring; it encouraged and facilitated unauthorized sexual behaviors considered dangerous or unseemly. These were not minor considerations, but central to the functioning of imperial governance. Sex always threatened the bulwarks of Empire and civilization, needing to be restrained and reined in. (Levine, “Sexuality, Gender, and Empire” 134-5)

While I agree with Levine that “unrestrained sexuality was an unending threat to Empire,” it is important to note that the CD Acts worked to mitigate this threat by targeting only women. The acts, while sweeping pieces of legislation, were not comprehensive restraints on deviant sexual behavior because those kinds of restrictions would have limited men. The government’s response to the threat of deviant sex and disease was not to eradicate vice but to regulate it—an ironic response to this issue since legislation restraining the sex industry, while punitive, also acts to support and maintain it by sanctioning its role in society. This again highlights how the preservation of imperial power required a different and hypocritical set of governing principles. Although the sexual acts of both men and women “threatened the bulwarks of Empire,” women’s bodies became the principal regulatory site. Their bodies “were a site, a symbol, through which a certain moral creed could be articulated” (Levine, “What’s British about Gender and Empire?” 275). The triangulation between patriarchy, empire, and deviant female sexuality I outline here produces regulatory action on the female body when patriarchal and imperial structures require strengthening from the ravages of venereal disease, and this action locates deviant female sexuality as the locus of contagion.

4.2 The Exposure of Male Hypocrisy and Its Threat to Empire

One way in which this triangulation was exposed in the late nineteenth century was through the speeches and writings of opponents of the CD Acts. From their initial passing, these laws were controversial, and the challenges to them were manifold. Not only did the CD Acts ignore the culpability of men in spreading disease, they also placed serious limits on individual liberty and could be abused easily since

on any pretext a policeman could detain a woman and require that she present herself before the Justice of the Peace. If the Justice decided that she was a

prostitute, he would order the woman to submit to an examination—a procedure which the Abolitionists referred to as ‘instrumental rape.’ No definition of the word prostitute was given; the word of a single policeman, a member of a special police force which was not part of the regular British system of justice, sufficed to bring a woman to court; no corroborative witness was needed. (Boyd 41)

The law’s reliance on police testimony without corroboration from other sources or evaluation by a jury became a sticking point for many opponents. During a meeting of the National Association for the Promotion of Social Sciences in 1869, W. P. Swaine presented a paper in which he argued against the extension of the CD Acts to the civilian population of Britain. He claims that allowing a police officer to administer these laws meant giving him “the attributes of prosecutor, judge, and jailer, and opens the door wide to great abuse of police power” (440).

Charles Taylor, another speaker at this meeting, took up a similar position, contending that

no one can look over the Contagious Diseases Act without at once recognising in it the most cruel, unjust, and despotic measure that has ever been proposed to a British Parliament. There is actually no definition of prostitution in the Act, and no proof of offence is required; positively the whole of the women of this country are placed at the mercy of a policeman’s suspicions, a policeman’s spite, jealousy, and revenge. Again, contrary to every principle of English law, the burden of proof is thrown not upon the *accuser*, but upon the accused, who may not only be innocent, but also penniless and friendless. (442)

He also points to the serious danger any accusation, reasonable or not, has on a woman in Victorian society since just the suggestion by a policeman that a woman is a prostitute “is sufficient to ruin her” (442). Taylor’s claim underscores how a woman’s reputation was as

important as her actual behavior. Should a woman be perceived as fallen, she might as well be, and the laws' loose guidelines in terms of definition, reporting, and evidence placed a heavy burden on women to not only reform but to also fear unreasonable suspicion.

While these arguments about the legal basis for the CD Acts are intriguing and important, the rhetoric of prominent female opponents focused more often on the hypocrisy of the laws rather than the threat they posed to civil liberties, and the speeches and writings of these women pointedly illustrate how patriarchy could become destabilized. From the perspective of these Victorian feminists, the CD Acts were inherently hypocritical because they singled out women, especially poor women, rather than men, as carriers of disease. Their criticism of the laws thus focused on the culpability of men in spreading vice and disease. As I have outlined, the containment of deviant sexuality bolstered Britain's imperial ideology that claimed moral superiority over the peoples the empire colonized. This means that challenges to the CD Acts that cited the immorality of men also questioned Britain's sense of superiority. Even if critics of the laws did not reference the British Empire explicitly, although some did, their commentary implicitly challenged an essential underpinning of colonialism: white men were superior to the sexually deviant men and women they colonized. In many colonial sites around the globe, British officials encountered societies with different customs regarding sex and family arrangement, and it "became a mainstay of colonial criticism" to disapprove "of the sexual behaviours of colonised peoples" (Levine, *The British Empire* 157-8). The narrative of British exceptionalism in this context promoted the idea that British men acted with restraint in their sexual relationships and that they treated women with more respect than colonized men did. Therefore, opponents of the CD Acts who emphasized the lack of restraint and hypocrisy of

British men destabilized this powerful narrative and widely held assumption about the natural divisions between the colonizer and the colonized.

Many women and men worked to repeal these laws, but Josephine Butler was the “moral and charismatic leader of the crusade” (Walkowitz 93). Reformers like her challenged male privilege and the double standard inherent in the laws. At the heart of Butler’s campaign, was a charge against men and what she called “*the hypocrisy of their lives*” (Butler, “The Moral Reclaimability of Prostitutes” 124). Butler did not approve of prostitution, but she abhorred society’s willingness to punish women exclusively for sexual acts involving both sexes.²³ As leader of the Ladies National Association for the Repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts (LNA), Butler wrote and spoke prolifically on the subject, and in a piece addressing the proposed

²³ Butler’s work, in many ways, acts as a pre-cursor to the social purity feminism of Sarah Grand who challenged sexual inequality while “underwriting traditional assumptions about women’s nature and duties” (Heilmann and Forward 3). The social purity movement was an important “feminist attack on modern masculinity,” but it was also “conducted through the patriarchal rhetoric of imperialist eugenics, an ideology which defined women as vessels for the reproduction of male power” (3). While the social purity movement critiqued male privilege, it also upheld notions of national morality and superiority (embodied in the woman) that align with imperial rhetoric. Social purity activists sought to hold men accountable, but they still focused on the female body as site of ideal purity since men would heal through women’s power to save them. In this scheme, women would challenge male privilege, but their bodies would still remain under scrutiny since their ability to save was predicated on their purity. Fallen women, then, would remain subordinated and would threaten national morality—a key notion in imperial ideology of superiority and exceptionalism.

extension of the laws in 1870, she acknowledges the constitutional issues with the acts and then goes on to highlight their hypocrisy:

It resembles the Spanish Inquisition in its system of paid spies, and the admission of anonymous whispers as evidence not to be rebutted. Contrary to the entire spirit of English Law, the whole burden of proof is thrown not upon the accuser, but upon the accused; there is a complete absence of all fair and open court—to say nothing of jury; and the accused, in this case, are the weakest, the most helpless, and most friendless of the community.

By this law a crime has been *created* in order that it may be severely punished; but observe, that has been ruled to be a crime in women which is not to be considered a crime in men. There are profligate men who are spreading disease everywhere, but the law does not take effect on *these*. (“An Appeal to the People” 113)

Butler uses foundational principles of English law to expose the double standard expressed in the CD Acts, and her criticism reveals the instability of Britain’s exceptional identity. In imperial ideology, the laws of British society were superior to those of “primitive,” colonized societies. If Britain’s legal foundations did not live up to or embody this superiority, however, this argument of exceptionalism would crumble. As she does in much of her writing, she notes the uneven standing of men and women, emphasizing that women working as prostitutes do so out of poverty and desperation while the men purchasing sex are simply profligates. At the center of this argument is a claim about the power men have over women. For Butler, women are driven to prostitution by need while men degrade themselves because they are free to do so. She writes in a “Letter to my Countrywomen, Dwelling in the Farmsteads and Cottages of England” that

“you must understand that very few ever begin to lead a bad life from choice. Thousands of the miserable creatures whom we call *fallen* have really not fallen at all, for they never stood upon any height of virtue or knowledge from which it was possible for them to descend” (151). While Butler views prostitution as a sin and a horrible aspect of society, she primarily blames men for its ubiquity in Britain because men have the power to choose whether or not to engage in criminal behavior for their pleasure. Annie Besant would later describe this difference between men and women succinctly: “Men are immoral for their amusement; women are immoral for bread” (98).

In addition to highlighting the acts’ incongruity with English law and the oppressed status of women, Butler also utilizes the notion of English exceptionalism to show how the acts do not fit within English society. In her “An Appeal to the People of England on the Recognition and Superintendence of Prostitution by Governments,” she asks, “Is this a law to be made in a country where individual liberty has been so carefully guarded? Nay it is a law for a country of slaves” (115). Butler’s question clearly aligns the law with one that may be upheld in a “primitive” society, and, in doing so, she again reveals hypocrisy in the “civilizing” force of imperialism. Later in the piece she goes on to describe the right that women have to speak up against the CD Acts, and she again contrasts England with other places around the globe:

Surely on a question which *directly strikes* at the physical and moral life of tens of thousands of women, and profoundly affects the morality of the whole population, which threatens the purity and stability of our homes, which stabs at the very heart of pure affection, which degrades all womanhood through foul associations of thought and feeling, and which murders chivalry and generosity towards women in the hearts of our sons and brothers, surely on such a question as this the

voice of the women of England should be heard; and undoubtedly it will be heard; for we live under no Imperialism in England, and to a Parliament—a future if not a present one—fairly and truly representing the people, we shall fearlessly appeal.

(128)

Butler's statement is significant for a number of reasons. First, she makes a convincing case for the increased involvement of women in politics since she argues that they should have a seat at the table when legislation affects women's bodies—an argument that will have a life long after her day. Second, she acknowledges that the CD Acts affect “the morality of the whole population” and endangers “the purity and stability of our homes,” which, as I discussed earlier, aligns her with the laws' proponents who believe the legislation will affect the morality of the entire nation. Third, she detaches British women from colonized subjects, claiming that British women have a parliament that will hear their appeals unlike native women living in a colony.

This reference to imperialism is significant because it draws attention to the shared vocabulary of gender politics and imperial rule. Butler shows here that she recognizes the subordinated status of women, but she believes that in a country like England, women should be able to demand their rights. This argument has important ramifications for British governance since Butler indirectly questions the role of imperialism at a time when the common view was that British colonizers helped bring greater freedom to colonized women. As Levine notes, colonies often “came, quite early on, to be defined by the apparently vast number of ways in which women were degraded and brutalised....The mistreatment of women came to be seen as definitive of primitive societies, and one of the many reasons justifying the need for colonial authority” (*The British Empire* 158). What did it mean then that Butler and others claimed that women were being mistreated in England? Did that mean the British Empire *was not* a source of

women's liberation? Later, Butler would shift her rhetoric in order to campaign for the repeal of the CD Acts in India. In her support of *this* cause, she does not differentiate between British and Indian women; rather, she calls them "fellow-citizens and sisters" and emphasizes "the sacred cause of Justice and of Womanhood" ("From Mrs. Josephine E. Butler" vii). Her position assumes equality between British and Indian women although it is indisputable that white women had more power than colonized women in the Victorian period. Butler was not alone in advocating on "behalf" of colonized females. In fact, "British feminists have tended to portray women from the colonies as helpless and degraded, enslaved and in need of help rather than as partners in a broader enterprise aimed at equality" (Levine, *The British Empire* 176).

Although Butler attempts to equalize the experience of "woman" across cultures and colonial boundaries, it is worth noting that she describes the fallen women for whom she campaigns with the same terms of desperation, enslavement, and helplessness. In one piece she describes the destitute woman as "a weak and prostrate figure lying at our door," "a corpse...an outraged corpse, crushed with the heaped and pitiless weight of the sins of others and her own," and women who have been "dedicated" to "profanest service" ("The Lovers of the Lost" 93, 94). In another work she borrows language of enslavement and darkness to illustrate the status of the fallen woman:

O my countrywomen, need I remind you of the fact, that the crusade we are engaged in is for the liberation of our fellow-women from the darkest, cruellest slavery the world has seen? Need I remind you how sad at all times is the lost of fallen woman,—how, in spite of the tenderness of Christ to the woman who was a sinner, society, professing His religion, has tacitly agreed to brand and outlaw her? And how, under this modern and inconceivably wicked system of the State

supervision of harlotry for the protection of the *male* sinner, the fate of outcast woman becomes tenfold dark and more hopeless. (“The Duty of Women” 125)

Butler characterizes these poor British women, like the Indian women on whose “behalf” she later speaks, as in need of saving, desperate for help in escaping their profane existence. This does not dismiss Butler’s racial bias in the India campaign, but it does show that she used this language of helplessness in multiple ways for rhetorical effect. In order to challenge prevailing attitudes about male privilege, specifically men’s ability to purchase sex with impunity, she worked to dramatize the experience of the fallen woman, to make the figure pitiable so that her audience would demand legal action and social purity for men and women. Furthermore, by comparing the fallen woman to a dark slave, Butler pulls on existing images and tropes of colonialism—specifically the abolished slave industry—to convince her audience of the fallen woman’s status as victim.

While Butler’s criticism of imperialism in her campaign against the domestic CD Acts may have been implicit, her attacks on men and male privilege were not. Her rhetoric shifted as needed to gain sympathy for her cause, but she never waived publicly in her opposition to state regulation of prostitution. She repeatedly makes her position clear, writing “It is not a law for Englishmen to endorse: it is a law worked out in secrecy, mystified by indefiniteness, upheld by violence” (“An Appeal to the People” 116). In a piece called *The Hour Before the Dawn: An Appeal to Men*, she takes the rhetoric of fallenness, of moral destitution and the possibility of redemption, and turns it on men. Instead of describing in vivid detail the horrible living conditions of fallen women in order to gain sympathy and zeal for reform from her audience, she utilizes her most colorful language to speak of men and *their* destitute nature. She writes,

My whole soul grows sick, my heart is faint, and my brain reels, I am haunted, I am stifled as by the smoke of Tophet, when men's sins rise up before me, the sins of my countrymen; yet, before God I declare it, I love you, my countrymen, my brothers. I love the grossest sinner that lives; in a certain sense I honour him. The poor coin, trampled down in the mire of the streets, still bears upon it the image and superscription of the king. I know when I look at the victim of sin—my brother, worn out, degraded, poisoned through his whole being—that God can, if he please, stretch forth the arm of his omnipotence and seize this leprous one proclaiming himself 'unclean, unclean,' purify him, transform him, and raise him up to sit in heavenly places among the sons of God and saints in light.

I know that you are lost men; that you can never become what you were,—never what you were. Yet hear me tell you, in Christ's name, that although you can never undo the past, nor return to innocence, you may through a mighty regenerating power become something better than what you were in guileless childhood. (246, 248)

The language Butler uses should seem familiar—gross, trampled, poor, lost, impure—these are the adjectives typically used to describe fallen women, but Butler uses them to describe men who are sexually sinful. She even borrows from the lexicon of fallenness and the civilizing mission when she writes that these men “can never become” what they once were. Like Emily and Martha in *David Copperfield* and Hetty in *Adam Bede*, they never can be whole or pure again. They never can regain what they have lost. Butler's description confronts the notion of woman as the source of social purity. For Butler, the argument that a primary part of a wife's familial

and societal role is to remain pure while her husband profits does not benefit families or society—it certainly does not benefit women. Butler wants purity for both sexes and while this seems simple, it challenges the foundations of patriarchal power. One of the reasons a patriarchal structure dominates is that it seems natural, without question, and historical to many who live by its discipline. Butler’s rich depiction of male wretchedness questions that natural ability and right to rule since she portrays the sinful man as a victim—too weak to resist worldly pleasures—and as wholly poisoned—too sick to generate good in the larger community.

As I outlined earlier, critiques of male privilege inherently question the underpinnings of colonial power, which is also built upon a perceived sense of its natural rule, unquestionable leadership, and historical precedence. Butler’s vivid rhetoric was crucial in repealing the CD Acts, and the controversy she stoked was due not only to the fact that she was an outspoken critic with good connections and linguistic prowess, but also to the fact that her criticism challenged much more than legislators’ voting records and principles. Her works on the laws challenged male privilege and hypocrisy, government surveillance, medical ethics, and separate spheres ideology. Each of these conventions played a critical part in maintaining imperial power, so Butler’s questioning of these practices and argument that women should not be treated like colonized subjects was destabilizing to the interdependent patriarchal and imperial systems. Of course, regulating venereal disease had a much longer lifespan in Britain’s colonies than it did in British towns in large part because of racist ideology and “the constant work required” to retain power in their colonies (Levine, *Prostitution, Race, and Politics* 3). Thus, while women in Britain increasingly gained more rights, it took much longer for colonized peoples across the globe. Furthermore, while Butler’s speeches and publications challenge the empire’s assumption of moral supremacy by highlighting male hypocrisy, her works also reinforce empire, to a

degree, by the fact that she utilizes conceptions of English exceptionalism. Butler's demands, while direct, are complicated in that she advocates for women's rights but does not promote an alternative femininity that does not depend upon sexual purity; rather, she demands that men be held to the same standard of purity as women. Despite these complications, her work still reveals how closely related issues of gender, sexuality, and empire remain.

As I discussed at the opening of this chapter, the debate about fallen women, disease, and imperial power garnered a large audience in the 1870s and 1880s. This debate also went on "to shape the feminist movement, the public debate about sexuality, the role of the state in public health, the regulation of the poor, and relations between colonizer and colonized" (Walker 476). The movement to repeal the CD Acts "served as a training ground" for female activists who would go on to campaign for the right to vote and other causes, and, perhaps most importantly, "Hearing women speak in public on such matters as prostitution and venereal disease, even on gynaecological examinations, was a new experience for the British public" (477, Carpenter 86). These topics were still largely off limits in polite society, but they became part of public discourse, and, for the first time, men were hearing women discuss these issues overtly while they advocated for equal protection under the law. As I highlighted earlier, Butler's depiction of the fallen, diseased woman as victim of male hypocrisy and deviancy served as a powerful image that challenged the narrative of social scientists and public health officials who saw the woman as source of contagion and degeneracy. Several fictional accounts at the turn of the century also complicated the narrative of fallen women, disease, and empire and challenged the notion of male moral supremacy and, by extension, British moral supremacy.

Sarah Grand's *The Heavenly Twins* (1893) serves as one of the best examples of this writing as Grand presents the consequences of bad marriages in which syphilitic and unfaithful

husbands serving in the same colonial regiment put their wives and children at risk. Her criticism of immoral military men, while pointed and inherently critical of an imperial force that allows for the deviant behavior of its officers, does not go so far as to dismantle the notion of British exceptionalism. The imperial project, as a whole, goes uncritiqued in the novel, but Grand does show the ways that British gender politics were imported to the colonies along with the patriarchal structure demanding female purity and allowing male licentiousness. As Iveta Jusová claims,

It soon becomes clear that Grand's purpose in setting part of her novel in a British colony says nothing of an interest in describing the native customs and peoples or the forming of contact zones between them and the British. Instead, the author invokes the Maltese location as a background for her commentaries on the corrupt customs of European colonial society and on the loyalty of the New Woman to the Queen. (36)

The novel, therefore, does not offer readers a glimpse into cross-cultural and cross-racial relations in Malta; it uses the colony as an alternate location that remains ruled by the idea that "Women are different. They must behave themselves" (Grand 338). Still, Grand's sustained attack on the moral supremacy of men undermines the caricature of the male imperialist as rational, self-controlled, and benevolent, so while her critique of empire is limited, her novel does underscore the ways British imperialism engendered compliance with patriarchal norms concerning marriage and the ways this restricted and damaged women.

In *The Heavenly Twins*, Grand does not focus on a fallen woman who is seduced, abandoned, and then lost; rather, Grand shows her readers what can happen when a woman marries a diseased man. This competes directly with the narrative of sexually deviant women

who bring disease “into the families of all ranks and stations” and instead questions the moral standing of men (Association for Promoting the Extension of the Contagious Diseases Acts 8). Her novel, like the prose of Butler, questions a patriarchal society that seeks to punish women when the health of men deteriorates and questions an imperial system that relies upon the moral supremacy of its agents. In Grand’s schema, the husband lacks purity, not the wife, and the husband’s depravity is all the more insidious because society does not hold him accountable or even recognize him as diseased.

She makes this theme clear by opening *The Heavenly Twins* with a section of a poem by Oliver Wendell Holmes. The lines she cites come from “Wind-Clouds and Star-Drifts” in the collection *The Poet at the Breakfast Table*, and they describe a monster who eventually becomes “Welcomed by all”:

The time is racked with birth-pangs; every hour
Brings forth some gasping truth, and truth new-born
Looks a misshapen and untimely growth,
The terror of the household and its shame,
A monster coiling in its nurse’s lap
That some would strangle, some would starve;
But still it breathes, and passed from hand to hand,
And suckled at a hundred half-clad breasts
Comes slowly to its stature and its form,
Calms the rough ridges of its dragon scales,
Changes to shining locks its snaky hair,
And moves transfigured into Angel guise,

Welcomed by all that cursed its hour of birth,
 And folded in the same encircling arms
 That cast it like a serpent from their hold! (1-15)

The truth of this monster's birth is one of "terror" and "shame." The little monster, despite the desire of some to "strangle" or "starve" it, lives and develops "slowly" as its "scales" become smooth and its "snaky hair" turns "to shining locks." The speaker reveals that this is not a true transformation; rather, the monster disguises itself and is "Welcomed." The speaker does not identify this monster as male, but Grand's use of the poem signifies her desire for the "misshapen" thing to be interpreted as such since her novel goes on to tell the story of three young women who "ultimately marry men who are well received by their parents and friends" but whose relationships "are finally either disastrous or unconventional" (Senf vii).

Grand frequently borrows the language of Holmes's poem to describe one of the husbands in *The Heavenly Twins* in order to mark him as monstrous. Evadne Frayling falls for and agrees to marry Major, later Colonel, George Colquhoun, who she discovers has a wild past. Evadne makes this discovery before consummating the marriage, and she resolves never to "live with him as his wife" because he is "a moral leper" (84, 79). Colonel Coquhoun, when listening to one of Evadne's letters, curls his moustache "with a peculiar set expression of countenance he was in the habit of assuming to mask his emotions," and he responds to the grief of Mrs. Frayling "with the surface sympathy of sensual men" (85). These references to his superficiality align him with the monster of Holmes's poem, who masks its true identity to gain acceptance.

Evadne, furious that she did not understand Colonel Coquhoun fully before marrying him, echoes the language of Butler and opponents of the CD Acts in emphasizing the ways that society ignores the vices of men. She tells her Aunt Olive, "Instead of punishing them for their

depravity, you encourage them in it by overlooking it; and besides...you must know that there is no past in the matter of vice. The consequences become hereditary, and continue from generation to generation” (80). Her aunt responds passionately as she acknowledges the truth in Evadne’s words but also describes the precarious position of women:

Don’t make me think about it. Surely I have suffered enough? Disagreeable to know! It is torture. If I ever let myself dwell on the horrible depravity that goes on unchecked, the depravity which you say we women license by ignoring it when we should face and unmask it, I should go out of my mind. I do know—we all know; how can we live and not know? But we don’t think about it—we can’t—we daren’t. (80-81)

Aunt Olive shows how women suffer not only physically as Evadne has made clear but also psychologically since they cannot help but know the actions of their men, but at the same time they do not have the power to “unmask” their “horrible depravity” without going insane. Olive’s testimony challenges the notion that British men treat their women well—a key rationalization for the civilizing mission of imperialism. From her perspective, women are forced to behave hypocritically knowing but not acting in response to deviant behavior.

This exchange between Evadne and her aunt offers readers a more nuanced and profound understanding of the ways that society’s refusal to hold men culpable affects women. Butler’s focus on the violated female body and the violated constitution helped Britons see the hypocrisy of the CD Acts, but Grand’s novel and this conversation between Evadne and Olive, in particular, show how the double standard affects pure as well as fallen women. Evadne remains a virgin while Olive remains loyal to her deceased husband—each, on the surface, fulfilling the Victorian ideal—but the pain of recognizing injustice, while feeling unable to act against it, is

acute and debilitating. In other words, Grand's novel reveals how a society that labels impure women as fallen and ignores the impurities of men ends up hurting *all women*—not just those who are ostracized or punished directly. Grand does create a minor character in the novel who is the archetypal fallen woman—a young French woman who was purchased with seventy-five pounds and then abandoned by Sir Mosley Menteith—and she serves to foreshadow Edith Beale's insanity and death, but Grand's attention does not remain on this woman long (291). Instead, the narrative focuses on the women who entered into marriages not knowing the risk. Evadne, the novel's model of self control, while able to form a friendship with her husband, ultimately suffers from the restraints and tensions of the relationship. She begins "as a bright young woman with numerous aspirations and sharp faculties," but Evadne deteriorates and struggles to maintain the desire to live. She tells her husband that she thinks about killing herself "when such thoughts come, from grief, and rage, and horror, I would do almost anything for relief." He stops her, begging her to "think." She replies,

"No, don't ask me to think!" she interrupted. "All my endeavour is not to think. Let me live on the surface of life, as most women do. I will do nothing but attend to my household duties and the social duties of my position. I will read nothing that is not first weeded by you of every painful thought that might remind me. I will play with my baby by day, and curl up comfortably beside you at night, infinitely grateful and content to be so happily circumstanced myself—Don, help me to that kind of life, will you? And burn the books....Let me live while you live, and die when you die. But do not ask me to think. I can be the most docile, the most obedient, the most loving of women as long as I forget my knowledge of life." (672)

Evadne's fall is not one from purity to defilement but rather one from strength to weakness, from lively intellectual to diminished housewife. She cannot read books and be a good wife and mother; she must choose the surface life that "most women do" in order to be "docile" and "obedient." Although this is not a sexual fall, it is a living death for Evadne in which her former self is gone, burned away along with the books. *The Heavenly Twins* shows us the broader ripple effects of societal norms that uphold different sexual standards for men and women, and Grand uses the spread of venereal disease to illustrate the ways that this ideology disseminates and damages those in its path. In this sense, venereal disease, as it did in the debates concerning the CD Acts, becomes both literal and symbolic; the damaging effects of syphilis are undeniable, and the disease's insidious nature helps show how male hypocrisy damages society.

Grand's literal and symbolic use of venereal disease is most violently expressed in the storyline of Edith Beale, who marries Sir Mosley Menteith, a man she fails to recognize as a diseased womanizer. Grand emphasizes Edith's purity describing her as the Beale's "only daughter, their white child, their pearl; and...a lovely specimen of a well-bred English girl" (Grand 155). Edith's purity arises from an "idea of Christian charity" valued by her family as "they always believed the best about everybody, not on evidence, but upon principle; and then they acted as if their attitude had made their acquaintances all they desired them to be....To keep their own minds pure was the great object of their lives, which really meant to save themselves from the horror and pain of knowing" (155-6). Her family's avoidance of the "pain of knowing" echoes Aunt Olive's words about the "torture" of recognizing "the horrible depravity" of men and underscores how upstanding families would turn a blind eye to sexual deviance because it was too painful to comprehend. This stance of pure innocence and ignorance does not serve her well, however, as she contracts syphilis from her husband, bears a "speckled toad" of a child,

goes mad, and dies (301). Evadne had tried to warn Edith and her mother about Sir Mosley, but the Beales believed that womanly virtue could overpower any previous “errors” (235). Edith tells Evadne, “if he is *bad*, I will make him good; if he is lost, I will save him!” (234). Grand exposes not the failings of these individual women in making a marriage choice but the ideology of the pure woman who can remake any man. Sir Mosley, it turns out, is not one to be remade, and even if he had conformed to a new way of life, his previous actions were enough to cause the death of his virtuous wife and the spoiled health of their son.

The stories of these two pure women, Evadne and Edith, show the extensive effects of male sexual deviancy as Grand challenges the narrative of the fallen, diseased woman who ruins families and instead places the blame on “the system...the laxity which permits anyone, however unfit, to enter upon the most sacred of all human relations” (340). Although it may be anyone, male or female, who enters unfit into marriage, *The Heavenly Twins* makes clear that women bear the brunt of the consequences. Thus, although the novel is not the archetypal fallen woman narrative, the text does make visible the same mechanisms that punish fallen women and shows how they, in fact, regulate all of her sex. The text also exposes the inadequacy of the CD Acts as a public health initiative since the laws would not have protected these women or their children. By regulating prostitution and ignoring the disease spreading ability of these men, sexually pure women and their offspring end up suffering. The argument, then, that the regulation and reformation of fallen women alone will protect the nation and its empire falls flat. In the next chapter, I examine another vision of social purity, William Booth’s *In Darkest England and the Way Out*, and I show how the impulse to reform fallen women continues to legitimize imperial ideology at the end of the nineteenth century. I pair this analysis with a close reading of Rudyard Kipling’s *The Light that Failed* in order to show how prose and fiction writers present a unified

vision of the empire by collapsing boundaries between pure and fallen women and between England and the colonies.

5 A CONSOLIDATED IMPERIAL VISION IN WORKS BY WILLIAM BOOTH AND RUDYARD KIPLING

I close my study of fallen women and the British Empire with an analysis of two works published in 1890: General William Booth's *In Darkest England and the Way Out* and Rudyard Kipling's *The Light that Failed*.²⁴ I am interested in these texts because of the ways they

²⁴ *The Light that Failed* has a publication and reception history worth noting. The first version of the novel was serialized in *Lippincott's Monthly Magazine*, an American publication, in 1890, and it employs the conventional marriage plot and ends happily (linking it with many mid-century works of realist fiction by writers like Dickens and Eliot) (Hampson 7). The longer single-volume version published a year later includes a preface from the author claiming that "This is the story of *The Light that Failed* as it was originally conceived by the writer." Norman Page writes that the reason(s) why Kipling's "original conception should have been modified and then returned to is unclear: there is no evidence of the kind of pressure that had, for example, led Dickens to change the ending of *Great Expectations* or Hardy that of *The Return of the Native*" (142). This version abandons the happy ending of the *Lippincott's* serialization and ends instead with the death of the now-blind protagonist, Dick Heldar. While the novel has not been popular with modern readers or critics, it was quite popular with late Victorian readers. It was adapted into a stage play by George Fleming, a film by F. McGrew Willis and Jack Cunningham, and was considered by Giacomo Puccini as possible inspiration for a new opera ("The Light that Failed': Stage Adaptation of Kipling's Story Well Received in London," *The Light That Failed* (1923), Budden 282). Performances of the play were held in Britain and the United States and

illustrate the consolidation of imperial ideology at the end of the nineteenth century, and I use the term “consolidation” to refer to the process by which disparate parts come to make up or be understood as a coherent whole. In the case of British imperial identity and vision, this was a complex process that was both impossible and necessary, and the writing of Booth and Kipling reveal how the collapsing of boundaries between fallen women and pure women and between England and her colonies helped coalesce disparate components of the empire and legitimize imperial action and ideology.

Consolidating the British Empire in the late nineteenth century was impossible because the empire was so diverse. As Philippa Levine reminds us,

Over the course of the nineteenth century, Britain added 10 million square miles and 400 million people to its colonial holdings. It would, by the end of the century, be the largest of the European empires, scattered across the globe in a bewildering variety of political and administrative forms. The diversity of this Empire was not only geographical and cultural, but also administrative. There was no one formula for rule or for take-over.... (92)

British involvement in India, for instance, began with a private company’s economic interests and then moved to direct rule while involvement in Africa evolved out of competition with other European nations for natural resources. Both the expansion and maintenance of empire throughout its history took on different forms in different colonies depending on the climate, population, health concerns, level of engagement with the local population, and economic

starred acclaimed actor Sir Johnston Forbes-Robertson. The stage and film adaptations depict the happy ending of Kipling’s serialized text with Maisie returning to Dick repentant and full of love.

interests. Moreover, as Levine notes, because the empire was vast, covering about a quarter of the world's land area, it was *unavoidably* diverse. As one late Victorian writer put it, "What...can the inhabitants of Australia and New Zealand, living on the other side of the Tropic of Capricorn, have in common with ourselves who live beyond the 50th degree of north latitude?" (Seeley 50). Bernard Porter makes a similar argument: "Politically and constitutionally, for example, the empire was the most confusing structure in the world, with no real common policy between any of its self-governing components, no agreed central direction, no 'permanent binding force' said [Alfred] Milner, 'or rational system'; and this dissipated its strength and sapped its efficiency" (*The Lion's Share* 136). Porter eventually claims that that this lack of unity illustrates, in part, how the British were "Absent-minded imperialists" who acquired more land and power through something more akin to a series of accidents or failures where the "question of blame is irrelevant" than to hegemonic violence where racist ideology was employed physically and psychologically (*The Absent-Minded Imperialists* 15). While I would argue with Porter's conclusion, his description of the empire as a confusing structure is correct and underscores the irony of "the British Empire" as a unifying term.

Despite the British Empire's status as "the most confusing structure in the world," the empire's survival and strength depended upon unifying principles that would tie together disparate colonies since stronger connections between colonies would have significant administrative and economic benefits. During the late nineteenth century, often referred to as the period of "new imperialism," public debate regarding imperial power heightened and the core issue of "this debate was concern about how Britain now stood in relation to other European powers" (Marshall 54). Britain now had to compete with the United States, France, Germany, and Russia in terms of international influence, and "from the 1880s other powers were acquiring

the means to support probes into areas where Britain had not faced serious competition before, especially in the Far East and in Africa” (54). Thus, P. J. Marshall appropriately titles his chapter of *The Cambridge Illustrated History of the British Empire* covering the years 1870-1918 as “The Empire under Threat.” In the 1890s, in particular,

it is possible to detect a certain unease, which derived from a common analysis of the contemporary world situation and of Britain’s place in it. Britain was under threat on a number of fronts, and the way to resist that threat, as the imperialists saw it, was for Britain to dig in, rally her colonies around her, and prepare for the siege. Of course it was not all fear and stark realism. Imperialists would not have been so anxious to defend their empire if they had not thought that it was intrinsically worth defending. Fundamentally they believed in their own abilities: were confident that they had it in them to run a great empire—that they were, if they organized themselves properly, *fit* to rule a quarter of mankind. (Porter, *The Lion’s Share* 137)

As I discussed in the previous chapter, one way that Britons “organized” and “fit” themselves for rule was by developing a sense of moral superiority over those whom they colonized. In the face of distinct administrative and economic differences, this ideological stance had a particularly effective unifying power since it could cover a host of variations or contradictions in policy.

This urge to unify, however, was not just ideological. Many late Victorians believed that creating stronger bonds of connection between colonies would have real economic and administrative benefits. J. R. Seeley in *The Expansion of England* (1883), an incredibly popular work of non-fiction, promoted imperial consolidation arguing that “ethnological unity is of great

importance when we would form an opinion about the stability and chance of duration of the Empire” (50). He claimed

that the future of this community [the British Empire] lay in ever strengthening ties between the separate elements, through a system of imperial federation.... Seeley believed that the emergence of large, resource-rich superpowers was an inevitable consequence of the industrial age, and he recognised that a small country like Britain had no chance to retain its position as a first-class power without enhancing its resources and population through the permanent consolidation of its empire. (Webster 37)

Seeley’s work inspired the formation of the Imperial Federation League, which “was established to promote the consolidation of commercial, military and political bonds between the component parts of empire,” and the organization and Seeley’s ideas “had a real impact” on “the question of imperial unity” (37, 38).

One of the ways we can see this impact is in symbolic representations of the empire that emphasize unity over difference. Even the phrase “The sun never sets on the British Empire” has this kind of effect in that it emphasizes the empire’s vastness as a unifying principle in and of itself since the empire exists under one sun that shines over all its regions. Booth’s *In Darkest England and the Way Out* also takes up this consolidating effort—though he does so in order to develop support for his vision of England as a colony in need of focused attention, resources, and reform. In order to build this support, he collapses the boundaries between England and Africa, fallen woman and negress in order to encourage his audience to apply their entrenched views of African people and culture to the poor of England.

5.1 Booth's In Darkest England and the Way Out

In my previous chapters, I have shown how patriarchy, empire, and deviant female sexuality exist in a triangulated relationship during the nineteenth century. Booth's bestselling vision for a new England keeps these points in tension, but he significantly modifies the imperial position by questioning its status in the British consciousness. In the previous chapter I outlined how the endangered health of military men pushed public health initiatives that restricted female bodies in the 1870s and 1880s. The goal in that case was to strengthen imperial power and to craft a sense of moral superiority by regulating sexually deviant women. Booth's text, on the other hand, outlines how sexually deviant women mark England itself as worthy of imperial intervention—both at home and abroad. Fallen women thus remain a principle regulatory site, but Booth refashions England as a colony in need of help while also encouraging emigration to Britain's colonies. Booth does not challenge British imperialism and its motivations; rather, he folds his vision for a better England into an already established ideology that the British have a unique ability and even duty to reform and civilize degenerate subjects. Booth situates "London's East End as an urban jungle," similar to the jungles of "darkest Africa," "that signified physical and spiritual decay, deterioration, and degeneration—a once-lovely garden that had gone to seed" (McLaughlin 79). One might expect that this kind of modification would alleviate some of the pressures on fallen women—those who bore the brunt of Victorian society's sexual double standard. Just as the Contagious Diseases Acts failed to effectively free fallen women from the ravages of venereal disease, Booth's revision fails to liberate fallen women from these pressures but rather, like many of the other texts I have discussed, reinforces the notion that the strength of the empire is expressed in response to the deviancy of female bodies.

Booth makes this relationship clear from the start. The book's frontispiece presents Booth's consolidated vision of England in which interdependent colonies and a system of reformation programs and emigration initiatives work together to save England. The frontispiece depicts three colonies under the heading "Salvation Army Social Campaign": "the colony across the sea," "the farm colony," and "the city colony." This interdependent model was meant to provide "work for all" and illustrates what Booth terms a "scheme" that "divides itself into three sections, each of which is indispensable for the success of the whole. In this three-fold organisation lies the open secret of the solution of the Social Problem" (General Booth 91). Booth calls this three-part scheme a "patriarchal family" and describes how each part leads into the next creating a funnel of sorts that ultimately moves across the sea:

The Scheme, in its entirety, may aptly be compared to A Great Machine, foundationed in the lowest slums and purlieus of our great towns and cities, drawing up into its embrace the depraved and destitute of all classes; receiving thieves, harlots, paupers, drunkards, prodigals, all alike, on the simple conditions of their being willing to work and to conform to discipline. Drawing up these poor outcasts, reforming them, and creating in them habits of industry, honesty, and truth; teaching them methods by which alike the bread that perishes and that which endures to Everlasting Life can be won. Forwarding them from the City to the Country, and there continuing the process of regeneration, and then pouring them forth on to the virgin soils that await their coming in other lands, keeping hold of them with a strong government, and yet making them free men and women; and so laying the foundations, perchance, of another Empire to swell to vast proportions in later times. Why not? (93)

The “Great Machine” Booth describes runs smoothly from city, to country, to “virgin soil” and illustrates upward social mobility and religious reformation as a process that maps perfectly onto Britain’s emigration system to established colonies. While this migration pattern seems to run smoothly, Booth also acknowledges that the “process of regeneration” requires “keeping hold” of deviants “with a strong government.” As I will later discuss, Booth establishes in his first chapter that the proliferation of fallen women in London’s slums validates this kind of “keeping hold” response. While Booth’s scheme affects men and women, the woman’s body as signifier for intervention makes her the principal regulatory site. Booth’s closing question in the passage above, “Why not?,” subtly reveals confidence in both progressive reforms and the imperial project. If one can take advantage of other spaces as places for new opportunity, why not? Britain’s imperial power thus provides the “way out” of “Darkest England.”

The frontispiece, which matches that of Thomas Hobbes’s *Leviathan* in terms of detail, depicts the interconnectedness of Booth’s three “colonies” and the social ills that make necessary this kind of revisioning of British society. The framing arch of the lithograph pairs “crime,” “drink,” and “shame” with “destitution,” “despair,” and “death,” a pairing common in stories about fallen women and their downward trajectory. At the bottom of the frontispiece, the artist depicts three million Britons drowning under the weight of a wide range of sins and states of depravity including “drunkenness,” “slavery,” “rape,” “infanticide,” “prostitution,” “murder,” “illegitimacy,” “divorce,” “brothels,” “wife desertion,” “beggar,” “suicide,” “betting,” “homelessness,” and “lunatic asylums.” The lithograph shows Salvation Army Officers helping people out of the water and moving them into the City Colony where they will have opportunities at “rescue homes,” “bakeries,” and “cheap food depots” and can live in homes for “married people,” “girls,” “inebriates,” “single women,” “children,” and “the homeless.” Clear

pathways guide the way to the peaceful, green, and spacious farm colony and then to “a far-distant region labelled ‘The Colony Across the Sea’” that is designated with “large letters thus distinguishing the region from the adjacent landmasses labelled ‘British Colonies’ and ‘Foreign Lands,’” and “is figured as a form of visionary or utopian realm, a reading suggested...by the portrayal of its buildings, domes and towers against the rosy glow of a western sun” (Wilson 3).

The social movement from the bottom of the page up illustrates a move from oppression to liberation not only in the shift away from sin but also in the shift from enclosure to wide open space. The crowds drowning in “the raging sea” are bunched together, oppressed by vice and poverty but also packed into the rough waters of the sea. The spatial orientation becomes more open as one moves up through the city and the farm. When one reaches the sea at the top of the lithograph, the space opens further and not only shows routes to existing colonies but offers routes “to all parts of the world.” Booth, accordingly, wishes to present the rest of the globe as a site of unlimited opportunity, space, and promise—a literal escape from the hell of drowning in poverty and vice. As Kelly Wilson writes, the frontispiece “simultaneously” evokes “a pilgrimage journey and Last Judgment scene....The overall vertical juxtaposition between dark and light, hell and heaven, encourages the eye to repeatedly traverse a colonial pilgrimage led by the Salvation Army towards the promise of spiritual and social regeneration” (5). This pairing of emigration with promise and opportunity mirrors that which I discussed in chapter two when examining the emigration of Little Em’ly in *David Copperfield*; her emigration and the hope it engenders in David illustrates an understanding of the imperial site as a place of greater opportunity, regeneration, and escape. For Booth, the emigration process spurs regeneration for those who leave and those who stay. Those who leave get to start their lives over away from London’s slums, and those who stay benefit from the exit of troublesome citizens. Racist

imperial ideology makes this scheme work since even immoral or reforming Britons would be morally superior to the colonized people over whom they would then have power.

The frontispiece and text of *In Darkest England and the Way Out*, of course, assume that mass areas of the world are blank spaces that the British are entitled to occupy and use for their own purposes and that established British colonies offer a continuation of British life and require little to no consideration for native populations. Both assumptions demonstrate how Booth consolidates or unifies disparate components of the empire in his utopian vision. To illustrate the first, Booth cites South Africa as an ideal space to set up an emigration funnel with the Salvation Army because it “presents to us great advantages for the moment. There is any amount of land suitable for our purpose which can be obtained, we think, without difficulty. The climate is healthy. Labour is in great demand, so that if by any means work failed on the Colony, there would be abundant opportunities for securing good wages from the neighbouring Companies” (General Booth 145). His assessment of the landscape involves analysis of the amount of land and how easily it could be “obtained”; he does not detail how the land would be acquired or how colonists would interact with current inhabitants. Booth’s assessment also ignores other colonial powers like the Dutch who would challenge British expansion in South Africa. He assumes that not only are the British fit to rule over any native population but also that they would be more justified than other nations in doing so.

To illustrate the second assumption that British colonies offer a continuation of British life, Booth emphasizes the compatibility of life between England and her established colonies by describing how boundaries have collapsed in an era of technological advancement: “The world has grown much smaller since the electric telegraph was discovered and side by side with the shrinkage of this planet under the influence of steam and electricity there has come a sense of

brotherhood and a consciousness of community of interest and of nationality on the part of the English-speaking people throughout the world” (143).²⁵ Here the consolidating principles are technology and language, which have made it possible to travel and communicate more effectively between distant regions. He claims that it is “absurd to speak of the Colonies as if they were a foreign land. They are simply pieces of Britain distributed about the world, enabling the Britisher to have access to the richest parts of the earth” (144). A few pages later, he describes his ideal emigration process “as the unmooring of a little piece of England, and towing it across the sea to find a safe anchorage in a sunnier clime” (152). The consolidation of various destinations (with different climates, cultures, and people) into little Britains allows Booth to position colonies as approachable sites full of opportunity. While other exploration tales and adventure stories might make a British audience understand the colony as an exotic space, Booth hopes to make his audience see the colony as welcoming and familiar—familiar enough to seem survivable and different enough to seem like a place where a person can begin anew. His refusal to acknowledge colonies as “foreign” underscores his philosophy that these lands offer a sunnier environment, both literally and figuratively, for those whom the Salvation Army rescues.

Booth also presents a consolidated vision of the empire in the first chapter of his book entitled “Why ‘Darkest England?’” In this chapter, Booth establishes the primary metaphor of his scheme; he pairs his text with that of Henry M. Stanley’s *In Darkest Africa* and connects England with Africa as a “guiding trope” to highlight the need for missionary work in the capital of the empire. Booth goes on to read or “translate the East End” through the lens of Africa,

²⁵ Kipling’s “The White Man’s Burden: The United States and the Philippine Islands” illustrates this kind of affinity as the speaker urges the US to “Take up the White Man’s Burden,” take the Philippines as a colony, and face “The judgment of your peers” (25, 28).

“where the rays of the sun never penetrate, where in the dark, dank air, filled with the steam of the heated morass, human beings dwarfed into pygmies and brutalised into cannibals lurk and live and die” (McLaughlin 80, General Booth 9). Booth quotes Stanley’s descriptions of the landscape and people of the Congo at length and then presents his position knowing that readers will have reacted strongly and with much interest to Stanley’s prose:

It is a terrible picture, and one that has engraved itself deep on the heart of civilisation. But while brooding over the awful presentation of life as it exists in the vast African forest, it seemed to me only too vivid a picture of many parts of our own land. As there is a darkest Africa is there not also a darkest England? Civilisation, which can breed its own barbarians, does it not also breed its own pygmies? May we not find a parallel at our own doors, and discover within a stone’s throw of our cathedrals and places similar horrors to those which Stanley has found existing in the great Equatorial forest? (11-12)

Booth’s argument relies upon his audience’s familiarity with this type of depiction of the colonial site, and as he acknowledges, it is “one that has engraved itself deep on the heart of civilisation.” He knows that Stanley’s book has reinforced or added to the canon of literature describing Africa in this manner.

The leap that Booth makes, then, is to consolidate this view of Africa with his view of London. He highlights similarities between the two spaces, arguing that while Africa “is all trees, trees, trees,” impenetrable and dark, London “is all vice and poverty and crime” and while “ivory raiders...brutally traffic in the unfortunate denizens of the forest glades...publicans...flourish on the weakness of our poor” (12). Darkest Africa and England, according to Booth, “are alike” in “its monotonous darkness, its malaria and its gloom, its

dwarfish de-humanized inhabitants, the slavery to which they are subjected, their privations and their misery” (12). In drawing these connections, “Booth elides any sense of difference between Darkest England and the Equatorial Forest....In his mind’s eye, the two visions are one” (McLaughlin 85).²⁶ Booth, an astute rhetorician, admits that his “African parallel” has limits, but he asks readers to examine their interests and biases in supporting the work of imperialism overseas:

An analogy is as good as a suggestion; it becomes wearisome when it is pressed too far. But before leaving it, think for a moment how close the parallel is, and how strange it is that so much interest should be excited by a narrative of human squalor and human heroism in a distant continent, while greater squalor and heroism not less magnificent may be observed at our very doors. (12)

In these lines, Booth seeks to collapse the boundary between the capital and the colony in order to gain support for his cause, but his consolidation of imperial spaces also serves to unite

²⁶ Booth was not the first writer to connect the urban poor with “savage” races on other continents. Henry Mayhew, for example, in his *London Labour and London Poor* discusses “The notions of morality among [costermongers] agree strangely...with those of many savage tribes. They are part of the Nomades of England, neither knowing nor caring for the enjoyments of home. The hearth, which is so sacred a symbol to all civilized races as being the spot where the virtues of each succeeding generation are taught and encouraged, has no charms to them. The tap-room is the father’s chief abiding place; whilst to the mother the house is only a better kind of *tent*. She is away at the stall, or hawking her goods from morning till night, while the children are left to play away the day in the court or alley, and pick their morals out of the gutter” (43).

differing attitudes and philosophies about poverty under an overarching imperial ideology that his readers, he assumes, have already accepted as rational and worthy of support. Therefore, Booth does not challenge British imperialism and its motivations; rather, he folds his vision for a better England into an already established energizing myth of empire that maintains the ability of the British to reform and civilize degenerate subjects.

Even when Booth does criticize British society, he does not challenge the civilizing mission of imperialism. Instead, he situates England as being in need of its own civilizing mission, thus placing the capital and the colony under a broader imperial vision that promotes salvation for all people. He conjures emotional images to connect the two distant lands, using Stanley's text as a basis for his consolidated vision. Booth writes,

Hard it is, no doubt, to read in Stanley's pages of the slave-traders coldly arranging for the surprise of a village, the capture of the inhabitants, the massacre of those who resist, and the violation of all the women; but the stony streets of London, if they could but speak, would tell of tragedies as awful, of ruin as complete, of ravishments as horrible, as if we were in Central Africa; only the ghastly devastation is covered, corpse-like, with the artificialities and hypocrisies of modern civilisation. (13)

Emotionally charged passages like this allow Booth to set as equal the poor of England and the savage of Africa. Without pathetic appeals such as this, it would be difficult for Booth to draw this parallel since it would be abhorrent to many English readers to think that men and women of their race would be equal to men and women of Africa.

Booth not only collapses boundaries between geographical spaces, that of England and Africa, but he also collapses boundaries between categories of women. Just as he compares

Congo's impenetrable forest with the poverty and vice of East London, he relies upon accepted notions and tropes to compare women, but this time he connects the "negress in the Equatorial Forest" with the fallen woman in the slums of London, forced to choose between starvation and prostitution. Booth spends little time describing the first woman, the negress, since he, as before, relies upon "a terrible picture" already accepted and ready in the minds of his readers, "one that has engraved itself deep on the heart of civilisation" (11). Additionally, Booth has already aligned, after Stanley, the African space with hell on earth, so the reader can imagine the negress to be a horrifying occupant of that awful place. He spends much more time describing the pitiable state of the fallen woman, relying upon that previously conjured image of hell and its occupants:

The lot of a negress in the Equatorial Forest is not, perhaps, a very happy one, but is it so very much worse than that of many a pretty orphan girl in our Christian capital? We talk about the brutalities of the dark ages, and we profess to shudder as we read in books of the shameful exaction of the rights of feudal superior. And yet here, beneath our very eyes, in our theatres, in our restaurants, and in many other places, unspeakable though it be but to name it, the same hideous abuse flourishes unchecked. A young penniless girl, if she be pretty, is often hunted from pillar to post by her employers, confronted always by the alternative—Starve or Sin. And when once the poor girl has consented to buy the right to earn her living by the sacrifice of her virtue, then she is treated as a slave and an outcast by the evry [sic] men who have ruined her. Her word becomes unbelievable, her life an ignominy, and she is swept downward ever downward, into the bottomless perdition of prostitution. But there, even in the lowest depths,

excommunicated by Humanity and outcast from God, she is far nearer the pitying heart of the One true Saviour than all the men who forced her down, aye, and than all the Pharisees and Scribes who stand silently by while these fiendish wrongs are perpetrated before their very eyes. (13-14)

Booth's rhetoric echoes Josephine Butler's in that he highlights how these women are the mistreated victims of men and unjustly carry all the blame of their situation. He also mimics her in the way he aligns fallen women with the colonized when it suits his purposes. While Butler does so to challenge the moral superiority of men, Booth does so in order to place fallen women under the care of a broader imperial mission, that patriarchal family the Salvation Army promotes in order to secure work for all and rescue the impoverished.

Fallenness, then, becomes a key marker of equity with the colonized—the fallen woman's existence validates an imperial ideology that promotes the reformation of souls and behavior. Booth equates the Equatorial forest with London's slums, the negress with the fallen woman, the malaria of Africa with the prevalence of disease in England, and the "Africa streams" that "intersect the forest in every direction" with "the gin-shop stands at every corner with its River of the Water of Death flowing seventeen hours out of the twenty-four for the destruction of the people" (14). Fallenness, drunkenness, and disease mark England as in need of salvation, and while Booth acknowledges the sins of men and women he makes clear that the woman's "fate is the most tragic" (14). Booth's broad imperial vision, which includes the capital and the colony as sites for intervention, further illustrates what Anne McClintock calls the "persistent ways in which women served as the boundary markers of imperialism" (24). As Booth makes clear in lifting up the fallen woman as an example of England's dire need for salvation and imperial intervention, she signals the kind of depravity that legitimizes colonial

presence. Even though Booth lists fallenness alongside drunkenness and disease as indicators of societal strife, I want to note that this does not diminish the fallen woman's position of importance in his scheme since her fall from grace is typically characterized as rife with both drink and disease. In Booth's chapter on "The Vicious," for example, he chronicles in detail the deplorable existence of "drunkards and harlots" (46). He writes that the "bastard of a harlot, born in a brothel; suckled on gin, and familiar from earliest infancy with all the bestialities of debauch, violated before she is twelve, and driven out into the streets by her mother a year or two later, what chance is there for such a girl in this world—I say nothing about the next? Yet such a case is not exceptional. There are many such differing in detail, but in essentials the same" (47). Here he consolidates once more, both acknowledging that different women have different experiences, while insisting that they are essentially the same. A few pages later, he again participates in this kind of synthesizing as he claims that one cannot tell the difference between a fallen woman who should be rescued and a prostitute who has freely chosen that line of work and should be chastized. He writes, "When you see a girl on the street you can never say without enquiry whether she is one of the most-to-be condemned, or the most-to-be pitied of her sex" (51). Booth's description shows how the fallen woman was a destabilizing figure—a figure difficult to determine as guilty or innocent. This characteristic again aligns her with the African woman who needs saving but also threatens destruction. Joseph Conrad would later depict Kurtz's mistress this way in *Heart of Darkness* (1899) as an ambivalent character both "savage and superb, wild-eyed and magnificent...ominous and stately" (60). Placing fallen and African women together, collapsing the boundaries that separate them, makes them less threatening since getting these girls off of the street or out of abusive relationships will remove this question of innocence or guilt or, at least, give the Salvation Army officer a sense that whether the woman

intentionally lived in sin, she is surely better off now away from her previous life. The salvation of a fallen or African woman, then, is particularly satisfying for the savior because he can easily convince himself that her life has improved because of his intervention.

While Booth was unsuccessful in implementing his scheme, his book was incredibly popular selling out of ten thousand copies “on the first day of publication”, then selling out “a second edition of forty thousand copies”; “within a month, yet another forty thousand copies had been sold. One year after its publication, more than three hundred thousand copies had been sold and the text had been translated into Japanese, German, French, and Swedish” (McLaughlin 94). Despite the book’s popularity, Booth did have his critics. Some reviewers found his scheme “crude, commonplace, childish, sensational, impractical, utopian, overambitious, shapeless, loose, pernicious” and “preposterous” (Ausubel 523). In a review published in *The Monist*, a contemporary of Booth’s took issue with the scheme’s religious focus:

It is not, therefore, necessary, to the success of “General” Booth’s scheme that it should be hitched to some popular, although unscientific and unreasonable religious conception of life; or that he should consider a reform in the life of any man a miracle, and therefore attribute all such to the direct interposition of God....As well might we expect a locomotive to move by tacking scripture all over it, as to expect any great social reform movement to be a success by associating it or making it depend upon some sort of religious creed. (453-4)

Nonetheless, Booth’s popular effort to consolidate Britons’ understanding of their empire as including the capital and the colony by utilizing familiar tropes and images of “Darkest Africa” and fallen women illustrates some of the ways in which British society was infused with imperial ideology at the end of the nineteenth century and how a consolidated imperial vision had become

integral in Britain's sense of itself in domestic and foreign affairs. Even "the name Booth gives his organization—the Salvation Army" embodies this kind of consolidation since it "conjoins the twin arms of previous European imperial adventures: the Christian missionary and the conquering soldier" (McLaughlin 82). Furthermore, Booth's pairing of the negress and the fallen woman to justify a civilizing response underscores the way that sexually deviant female bodies were key markers in Victorian society.

5.2 Kipling's *The Light that Failed*

Rudyard Kipling's *The Light that Failed* similarly presents a consolidated image of the imperial project through his characterization of the fallen woman. In his first novel, Kipling does not equate the capital with the colony (he repeatedly marks them as different) but he does collapse boundaries between categories of women, and in doing so, Kipling, like Booth, uses the woman as a marker to legitimize imperial intervention and particularly male participation in it. In chapter two, I proposed that the tension between deviant female sexuality and patriarchy produces and reinforces normative behavior and that the British Empire helps negotiate this tension and keep it productive. Through the fall and emigration of female characters in *David Copperfield* and *Adam Bede*, we see how the male protagonists develop and mature in response to the actions and experiences of these women. These men adopt normative behaviors in contrast with these women who sin and then are sent off in order to cleanse the community and leave room for these now mature men to recover and enter productive relationships. In these novels, while the fallen women are intriguing characters, the authors mean for us to focus primarily on the key men in the texts—the women become those against whom the men are measured. *The Light that Failed* revisits this idea and tension between the spheres of men and women, but whereas in Dickens and Eliot there were multiple visions of womanhood (Little

Em'ly and Agnes, Hetty and Dinah), in Kipling's text, we see a condensed vision of gender relations as the New Woman and the fallen woman become one in the British imperial mind.

This condensed vision is embodied in Dick Helder's masterpiece "Melancolia." As in Booth's text where the analogy between Darkest Africa and England acts as the key metaphor of his scheme, Dick's painting becomes the focal point, the consolidated vision of Dick's world. The artist works for the Central Southern Syndicate composing the illustrations that accompany stories from the frontlines of British battles. Dick struggles throughout the novel to understand his relationship with another artist, Maisie, with whom he grew up under the care of a foster parent. Eventually, Dick goes blind, the result of a wound he got in the Sudan, and he loses his livelihood. During this period of physical degeneration, he works obsessively on his "Melancolia" painting and in it he meshes the images of Maisie, the New Woman, and Bessie, the fallen woman, to create a "flame on the canvas, in the likeness of a woman who had known all the sorrow in the world and was laughing at it" (*The Light that Failed* 206). While one might initially view this artistic effort as one of female empowerment since the woman pictured boldly mocks her pain, Dick's melding of the two women robs them of their agency and individuality. Additionally, his inability to see the image clearly, Bessie's violent destruction of it, and Maisie's swift escape after viewing it all point to the painting's troubling significance and its status as an artifact of gender struggle.

Just as the first pages of Booth's text establish the primary metaphor and tensions of his scheme, the first two chapters of *The Light that Failed* introduce the tensions between the settings and sexes of the novel that ultimately will become contained in Dick's "Melancolia." Eric Solomon argues, "The brief opening idyll of *The Light that Failed* sets forth the three

subjects of the novel—love, art, and blindness” (31).²⁷ Chapter one begins in medias res with a conversation between Dick and Maisie as children while they contemplate what trouble they will be in if they are caught with a recently purchased revolver. This chapter foreshadows later events (Maisie nearly blinds Dick when she fires the gun) and sets up the two children as a mismatched couple and competitors of sorts rather than future lovers. Their attachment is one-sided with Dick much more enamored with Maisie than she with him. When he learns that she will be leaving their shared second home to go to school, he confesses his love for her and asks her to promise to care for him. Maisie reluctantly agrees to promise what he asks though she repeatedly chastizes him, “Don’t be stupid” and “Oh, Dick, don’t! Please don’t!” (10, 12).

Kipling aligns Dick’s devotion to Maisie with his desire to conquer the world, but his attempts to conquer and court her fail time and again. After Dick and Maisie have discussed their likely futures, Dick tells her “the words he had been boggling over for the last two hours”: “‘And I—love you, Maisie,’ he said, in a whisper that seemed to him to ring across the world,—the world that he would to-morrow or the next day set out to conquer” (15-16). His declaration of love is more of a declaration of war since it rings out across the globe and initiates his conquest. That night Dick has “a wild dream” in which “He had won all the world and brought it to Maisie in a cartridge-box, but she turned it over with her foot, and, instead of saying ‘Thank

²⁷ He goes on, “In its simplest terms, the idyll consists of a stolen holiday taken by the two children, Dick and Maisie. During a shooting expedition by the sea they escape from the dull reality of daily life and feel the first stirrings of love; when they think of the future, Dick confidently asserts his intention to become an artist; when Maisie accidentally fires the revolver, Dick is momentarily blinded by a powder burn. Love, art, [and] blindness thus coalesce in this précis of the novel” (31).

you,’ cried— ‘Where is the grass collar you promised for Amomma? Oh, how selfish you are!’”

(17). Dick positions Maisie as the impetus for global engagement but also as the unsatisfied recipient of that quest’s fruits. Maisie will remain unsatisfied or unmoved by Dick’s quests, pleas, and gifts throughout the novel. While he continually attempts to woo her and tutor her in her work, he repeatedly finds her uncontrollable. He cannot convince her to love him or work differently as an artist.

Chapter two starkly contrasts with chapter one. Years have passed and Dick has left England to seek work as a special correspondent covering the Sudan campaign, and the distance between the domestic setting of the first chapter and the colonial setting of the second is significant. The gap between England and the colonial military site becomes a joke of the text with Dick and his colleagues consistently remarking on the view of the English public versus the men’s lived experiences on the ground. The opening of the chapter illustrates this as Dick reflects on how English readers might fare in the harsh conditions along the Nile River:

I’m not angry with the British public, but I wish we had a few thousand of them scattered among these rocks. They wouldn’t be in such a hurry to get at their morning papers then. Can’t you imagine the regulation householder—*Lover of Justice, Constant Reader, Paterfamilias*, and all that lot—frizzing on hot gravel?

(18)

Dick’s joke reveals how far removed he is from English life and how far removed he is from the setting of chapter one. The stock characters of his homeland, while they might love to read about colonial outposts and feel as if they understand the place, could not actually exist in this foreign environment. The land itself exists as a threat to the British camped there as the Nile “raced round a basalt-walled bend and foamed across a rock-ridge half a mile upstream. It was

as though the brown weight of the river would drive the white men back to their own country”

(20). The narrator also takes up this mocking tone in describing the work of the men:

With the soldiers sweated and toiled the correspondents of the newspapers, and they were almost as ignorant as their companions. But it was above all things necessary that England at breakfast should be amused and thrilled and interested, whether Gordon lived or died, or half the British army went to pieces in seconds. The Soudan campaign was a picturesque one, and lent itself to vivid wordpainting. (22)

This mocking tone firmly establishes this setting as distinctly separate from the earlier domestic scene of young boy and girl in England. Not only has Dick left home, but he has travelled to a place both beloved and uninhabitable by British readers.²⁸

²⁸ In this distant place, picturesque for an English reading public, far removed from the domestic scenes of chapter one, Dick meets Torpenhow, a war correspondent for the Central Southern Syndicate. The company, which Dick comes to work for as an illustrator,

did not concern itself greatly with criticisms of attack and the like. It supplied the masses, and all it demanded was picturesqueness and abundance of detail; for there is more joy in England over a soldier who insubordinately steps out of square to rescue a comrade than over twenty generals slaving even to baldness at the gross details of transport and commissariat. (23)

The company’s mission, then, is not to realistically represent the gritty life of the frontlines; rather, the company concerns itself with giving audiences a view of war that is “suitable for a picture” and possibly “careless of the truth” (“picturesque,” def. 1, def. 2). Torpenhow’s summarizing description of the battle along the Nile in which Dick receives his head wound as

The drastic shift between chapters one and two in terms of setting and perspective is significant because Kipling will go on to show how these disparate spaces influence each other. The primary connection between the two spaces is “the public”—a vague group that becomes a character in the text as Dick frequently refers to them or acts in response to their desires. The vision under scrutiny in the novel is not only Dick’s but also the consuming public who values some work and not others and who expects and pays for a particular image of the imperial

“a sanguinary battle, in which our arms had acquitted themselves” exhibits this compressed, audience-conscious style and contrasts with the narrator’s more vivid description, which consists of one long paragraph running several pages and chronicles the “attack of three thousand men who had not learned from books that it is impossible for troops in close order to attack against breech-loading fire” (*The Light that Failed* 30). Although this battle was like many others faced by Dick and his colleagues, “No civilised troops in the world could have endured the hell through which they came, the living leaping high to avoid the dying who clutched at their heels, the wounded cursing and staggering forward, till they fell—a torrent black as the sliding water above a mill-dam—full on the right flank of the square” (30-31). In this battle, Torpenhow fights with “an Arab...turning over and over with his captive” and succeeds in gouging out one of the man’s eyes. Dick does not fare as well, receiving a head wound that gives him the sensation that “Something seemed to crack inside his head” (33). After this, Torpenhow sits down and is “pleased to call” that fight a “sanguinary battle” (34). While the battle certainly was bloody as the term suggests, Kipling shows us how this summary of the conflict misrepresents the affair. One might argue that no narrative description could capture the horrible violence and chaos of war, but Kipling offers readers two descriptions to compare—the narrator’s and the character’s—and we see immediately how one undercuts the other.

experience. One pervading tension in the novel is the question of whether or not Dick will remain in the light of the public and whether his vision will continue to match theirs. This perspective differs significantly from Booth's. Booth spends pages of his manifesto equating the lives of the London poor with the lives of savage Africans while Kipling creates a disjointed vision of the imperial space highlighting how the public at home in the capital receive a distorted picture of the violent battlefield in the colony. Even with this major difference, however, both writers emphasize how sexually deviant women propel imperial action and solidify imperial ideology. This is crucial because it shows that despite drastically different presentations of London, the role of the deviant female remains the same—she is constant despite conflicting perspectives of London and its connection to the imperial mission.

Although Kipling accentuates the gap between England and the Sudan, he explicitly links Dick's injury in chapter two with his experiences with Maisie in chapter one. As Dick recovers from his blow to the head, he conflates the two incidents:

His eye was held by the red splash in the distance, and the clamour about him seemed to die down to a very far-away whisper, like the whisper of a level sea. There was the revolver and the red light,...and the voice of some one scaring something away, exactly as had fallen somewhere before,—probably in a past life. Dick waited for what should happen afterwards....He fired at random, and the bullet went out across the desert as he muttered, 'Spoilt my aim. There aren't any more cartridges. We shall have to run home.' He put his hand to his head and brought it away covered with blood. (33)

The landscapes of these two chapters meld as Dick senses both a sea (like that where he went shooting with Maisie) and a desert and his desire to "run home" alongside his discovery of his

bleeding head. “Kipling never hints,” writes one critic, “he is quite explicit that this is meant to be a repetition of the earlier scene. All the same details are in evidence, the revolver, the blinding wound, and the image of the sun, this time shining on a blood-stained spear” (Solomon 32). These links certainly help Kipling establish the first chapter as foreshadowing later events, but they also provide us insight into how Dick sees the world and his role in it. Dick processes this incident through the lens of his shooting day with Maisie—the day he learned she was leaving and the day she promised to always care for him. In other words, he associates his injury with an experience of keen disappointment in the woman he loves. So while Kipling does not equate the capital with the colony in the manner of General Booth, he does show how the relationships and incidents of home come to shade those of the colonial space.

While Dick collapses different experiences at this crucial moment, he also creates this kind of consolidation in the painting of his “Melancolia” in which he blends the New and fallen women of the text. This painting signifies gender struggle as Maisie and Dick compete over it and as Dick’s success or failure indicates his ability to control women. The idea for this work comes from Maisie who becomes entranced by James Thomson’s long poem *The City of Dreadful Night* (1874). The poem, which presents a despairing “vision of civilization and of the human life within it,” is a reflection of a callous, urban environment and an exploration of the human psyche (Tinkler-Villani 126).²⁹ Maisie’s primary interest lies in Thomson’s final canto

²⁹ This poem, like Dick’s painting, is a complex, layered piece and a site of artistic consolidation. The poem references other famous works including on Dante’s *Inferno* and Albrecht Dürer’s *Melencolia I*, using these to build a textured exploration of human hopelessness. In the work of Kipling, the poem becomes a palimpsest, of sorts, as Maisie and Dick both use it’s description of *Melencolia* to inspire their paintings, offering their interpretations of the poet’s closing image,

and his description of Albrecht Dürer's *Melencolia I*: "Her folded wings as of a mighty eagle, / But all too impotent to lift the regal / Robustness of her earth-born strength and pride" (qtd. in *The Light that Failed* 174). Fittingly, the New Woman Maisie and her female companion cite passages from the poem that describe the supernatural woman's strength and relentless work in the face of "all her sorrow" rather than the poem's consistent "brooding meditation" on the hopeless and solitary nature of human life (175, O'Gorman 394). Maisie, the woman who wants control over and success in "my work—mine,—mine,—mine!," finds inspiration in this woman who "Words cannot picture" and whose "fate" is "heroic and calamitous" (*The Light that Failed* 81). Kipling depicts the two female artists as interested in but also ignorant of the Melancolia; one would think that Maisie would be able to connect with this character and convey her complexity on canvas because of her own experiences, labor, and lack of success, but the red-haired girl's "lazy" reading of the poem suggests that these women still do not understand the emotional depth of the piece (174). Maisie also says that she does not plan to "embody herself in the picture," suggesting that while she is attracted to the description of the Melancolia, she does not understand or see how she connects with the character (175). Dick immediately warns against the project saying, "You might as well try to rewrite *Hamlet*. It will be a waste of time" (174). Dick's response dismisses the idea that Maisie will be able to rise to this challenge, but it also reveals his understanding of the poem since Thomson's work focuses on the lack of progress and purpose in human labor. Thomson prefaces his poem with several lines from Giacomo Leopardi:

Poi di tanto adoprare, di tanti moti

and as Kipling later went on to write a short story entitled "The City of Dreadful Night" in which he paints a hot, corpse-filled picture of Lahore on an August night.

*D'ogni celeste, ogni terrena cosa,
 Girando senza posa,
 Per tornar sempre là donde son mosse;
 Uso alcuno, alcun frutto
 Indovinar non so.*

Then out of such endless working, so many movements of everything in heaven and earth, revolving incessantly, only to return to the point from which they were moved: from all this I can imagine neither purpose nor gain. (O'Gorman 395)

Dick's negative reaction to Maisie's idea directly reflects the poem's pessimism, but when Maisie responds to his disapproval saying that she does not believe he has the ability to do a piece like the *Melancholia* because his expertise is in soldiers' "blood and bones," Dick rises to defend himself. He tells her, "That's a direct challenge. If you can do a *Melancholia* that isn't merely a sorrowful female head, I can do a better one; and I will, too. What d'you know about *Melancholias*?' Dick firmly believed that he was even then tasting three-quarters of all the sorrow in the world" (*The Light that Failed* 175). Maisie's reply shows how Kipling not only turns this dispute into a competition between two artists, but how he also makes the painting a site of gender struggle: "'She was a woman,' said Maisie, 'and she suffered a great deal,—till she could suffer no more. Then she began to laugh at it all, and then I painted her and sent her to the Salon'" (175-6). Here again Maisie does not communicate a connection with the character; rather, she names the character's suffering as woman and then claims her mastery over the concept, having "painted her and sent her to the Salon"—even though Maisie has not yet completed the piece. The friends' disagreement over the poem and the painting exposes the key gender question in the novel: Who can most accurately understand and represent a suffering

woman? A man or a woman? More specifically, can a New Woman who has committed herself to her work rather than romantic relationships faithfully execute what she claims she can? Can a male artist who hardly acknowledges the value of female labor ever depict a woman with “feet thick shod to tread all weakness down”? (Thomson 1074). Who of them, in Dick’s terms, can “rewrite *Hamlet*”? The answers to those questions, as Kipling’s novel reveals, are complicated. Dick’s process for working on this painting, however, ultimately shows how he comes to understand the notion of women’s strength and suffering and how he folds that into his imperial vision. Dick has ambivalent feelings towards the project at the start, but the painting he eventually produces, at the cost of accelerating his loss of vision, presents a condensed understanding of womanhood in which he consolidates the New with the fallen. Dick’s consolidation eases his ambivalent feelings towards these women, and on the canvas, he is able to exert a control he fails to in his real life.

Dick also seeks to exert control and understanding by putting his struggle with Maisie into imperial terms. After his argument with Maisie over the painting, he goes to the park and expresses his frustrations by “swearing audibly, and when he found that the infirmities of the English tongue hemmed in his rage, he sought consolation in Arabic, which is expressly designed for the use of the afflicted.” Despite his efforts,

He was not pleased with the reward of his patient service; nor was he pleased with himself; and it was long before he arrived at the proposition that the queen could do no wrong.

“It’s a losing game,” he said. “I’m worth nothing when a whim of hers is in question. But in a losing game at Port Said we used to double the stakes and go on. She do a Melancholia! She hasn’t the power, or the insight, or the training.

Only the desire. She's cursed with the curse of Reuben. She won't do line-work, because it means real work; and yet she's stronger than I am. I'll make her understand that I can beat her on her own Melancolia. Even then she wouldn't care. She says I can only do blood and bones. I don't believe she has blood in her veins. All the same I love her; and I must go on loving her; and if I can humble her inordinate vanity I will. I'll do a Melancolia that shall be something like a Melancolia—"the Melancolia that transcends all wit." I'll do it at once, con—bless her." (*The Light that Failed* 177)

Dick expresses his frustrations with and ongoing love for Masie in imperial terms—first translating his anger from English into Arabic, which he believes is better suited to communicate pain, and then comparing the stakes of this relationship with those he would bet in Port Said. His final words are ambivalent, a mixture of a blessing and a curse. Like the street girls in *In Darkest England* who engender both pity and loathing, Maisie, this woman who wants her own career and who is both weak and strong, inspires blessings and curses. While Booth equates the fallen woman with the negress in order to give readers a sense that this woman can (and should) be reformed, Dick translates his discomfort with Maisie into Arabic in order to give himself a sense of mastery since he previously used this language in the imperial space where he was able to exert more control.

The connection between Dick's relationship with Maisie and the imperial space differs from Booth's consolidation of capital and colony, but Kipling's scheme still reveals an important association between the two. In *The Light that Failed*, the behavior of the New Woman and her unwillingness to conform spurs imperial visions in which the British man can access and appropriate the native tongue and culture for his purposes. At home, one calls gender relations a

losing game while in the colony, one views a high stakes bet as worthy of increase. In one situation, Dick is positioned to fail, and in the other, Dick is positioned to win—despite the odds. Dick wants to win Maisie so badly, but she repeatedly refuses to follow his advice even though she keeps asking for it and hoping that her friendship with him will help her career. He tries to conquer her by suggesting alternatives to her artistic methods and eating habits, wishing to exert control over her approach to art as well as her body. She does not do the line work or monitor her eating the way Dick suggests. She, does, however have desire and strength, and these qualities make her unconformable (or we might say unconquerable since Dick has previously defined his love for her in terms of a conquest). Rather than equating England and the colony, Kipling shows how the experiences in England drive actions in the colony or attract men to it.

Dick's ambivalence towards both his Melancholia and Maisie shifts when he meets the fallen woman of the novel, Bessie, and he begins to conflate the two women on the canvas. Dick meets Bessie immediately after Maisie leaves London, and he quickly starts to treat her as a stand-in for his childhood friend. This consolidation of the two women is important because it reveals how the male gaze views the deviant female body. Even when the behaviors are different (Maisie's deviance comes from her desire for independence and success, and Bessie's deviance comes from her shadowy sexual past) Dick, the male artist, sees them as the same or, at the least, lets one stand-in for the other.

This association between fallen and New Women is an intriguing one because it raises serious questions about categorization both in the novel and by contemporary critics. In the previous chapter, I highlighted the anxieties surrounding fallen women, disease, and empire—specifically fears about how prostitution spread syphilis among the military and civilian population of Britain—and the ways that these fears illustrate an ironic desire for the British

Empire to have moral superiority. After the repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts in 1886, fears about prostitution and sexually promiscuous women did not disappear, as Booth's text makes clear, but they did take on new vocabulary. Homes for fallen women continued to operate and stories about their dire circumstances continued to circulate, but a new, troubling category of women began to emerge in public discourse that, like fallen women, challenged the most patriarchal of structures: the British Empire.

She would come to be called "the New Woman," but as Sally Ledger makes clear, "The New Woman as a concept was, from its inception, riddled with contradictions" (16). Some of these contradictions are born out in the variety of terms used to describe her. "Prior to 1894," Ann L. Ardis writes, "the New Woman had been called *Novissima*, the Odd Woman, the Wild Woman, and the Superfluous or Redundant Woman" (10). This category, while seen as characteristic of *fin-de-siècle* life and culture, has concrete connections with the categorization of fallen women. Their affinities lie first, of course, in their garnering of a category, of a vocabulary dedicated to their existence. The "need" for this categorization lies in the fact that these women exist outside of what was prescribed as normative female behavior—especially in regards to sex, marriage, and family. Like the fallen woman, "one of the defining features of the dominant discourse on the New Woman at the *fin de siècle* was the supposition that the New Woman posed a threat to the institution of marriage" (Ledger 11). While the fallen woman threatened marriage with illegitimacy and disgrace, the New Woman threatened marriage by refusing to participate. Even here though, we find disagreement over the primary characteristics of this illusive figure since some saw the New Woman as "sexually decadent" while others saw her as "a 'mannish,' asexual biological 'type'" (16). Just as the fallen woman was seen by some as a victim of male privilege and by others as a diseased seductress, the New Woman inspired

multiple narratives about her nature. *The Light that Failed* contains this contradiction with Dick at one time thinking of Maisie as “a woman to be desired above all women” and telling her at another point “You aren’t a woman” (79, 127). To Dick, Maisie seems to defy categorization—she’s both desirable and unavailable, attractive and mannish. Connecting Maisie, then, with Bessie, a woman who fits much more snugly into a known framework, one of fallenness and poverty, helps Dick to gain mastery over his understanding of Maisie.

The fallen and New Woman’s threat to the institution of marriage was also a threat to the role of motherhood. Just as Tennyson’s poem with which I opened the previous chapter makes clear, women served as the mothers of imperialists, and their failure to fulfil that role had serious consequences for the empire. One key affinity marker of fallen and New Women is their failure to properly fulfil the role of mother. The fallen woman, as the narrative goes, does not fulfil this role because of her downward spiral and death. Even when she does live, her inability to become a respectable wife keeps her from producing children in an acceptable domain. Rather, her children live in dire poverty, likely to enter criminal circles or become wards of the state. The New Woman does not fulfil her role as mother because she refuses to participate. She opposes marriage on ideological grounds, wishing to retain her independence or to challenge the inequities of the institution. Thus both of these categories of womanhood risk creating social disorder since marriage was understood to be a crucial cornerstone of the nation, its economy, and its empire.

Fallen and New Women, however, are distinct in important ways. While many viewed fallen women as sexually deviant pariahs who deserved their expulsion from the community, many also viewed them as betrayed victims. Even the term “fallen,” as harsh and permanent as it may be, connotes a lack of control—or, at least, leaves room for this possibility. To fall, one is

pushed, tripped, or made to feel off balance. To be a “Wild” or “New” woman, however, is to be in control of one’s behavior and status. The New Woman, while contradictory, is not a victim; rather, she is defined by the choices she makes, and these choices mark her as a challenger to normative female behavior. While her sexual deviance might mark her as fallen, what was more disturbing about her to Victorians was the way she could bring about the fall of men. Ardis writes, “A tremendous amount of polemic was wielded against [the New Woman] for choosing not to pursue the conventional bourgeois woman’s career of marriage and motherhood. Indeed, for her transgressions against the sex, gender, and class distinctions of Victorian England, she was accused of instigating the second fall of man” (1). From this perspective, the fear of New Women lies in their possible pollution of men and their behavior.

Dick and Torpenhow’s first meeting with Bessie categorizes her as fallen, and her status as such ultimately helps Dick paint Maisie—a woman he repeatedly fails to understand or control. Torpenhow tells Dick how he first came upon Bessie,

It looks bad, I admit, but I was coming in after lunch, and she staggered into the hall. I thought she was drunk at first, but it was collapse. I couldn’t leave her as she was, so I brought her up here and gave her your lunch. She was fainting from want of food. She went fast asleep the minute she had finished....She was simply dropping with starvation. She almost fell into my arms, and when she got the food she ate like a wild beast. It was horrible. (183)

Dick replies, “Poor little wretch! Look at that face! There isn’t an ounce of immorality in it. Only folly,—slack, fatuous, feeble, futile folly” (183). The consistent descriptors of her as stumbling, dropping, and falling suggest she has fallen from grace, and Dick’s observation that her face is not immoral but foolish implies her poverty has been the result of an unwise decision.

When Bessie acknowledges that she has left service, Dick asks her, “And how do you like being your own mistress?” She replies, “Do I look as if I liked it?” (184). Other passages hint that Bessie worked as a prostitute. She tells the men that she was “hit cruel” because she “spoke to a man,” she’s surprised that Dick will pay her to model for him because it does not involve doing anything, and Dick tells her that she does not need to “wear that paint” when she comes to model for him (184-5, 186). Furthermore, her willingness later on to live with Torpenhow even if he does not marry her indicates her deviant morals and her recognition that once fallen she will not regain respectability. She pleads with him,

’Tisn’t right o’ me to do this, but I can’t help it; and you were so kind,—so kind; and you never took any notice o’ me. And I’ve mended all your things so carefully,—I did. Oh, please, ’tisn’t as if I was asking you to marry me. I wouldn’t think of it. But cou—couldn’t you take and live with me till Miss Right comes along? I’m only Miss Wrong, I know, but I’d work my hands to the bare bone for you. And I’m not ugly to look at. Say you will! (192)

Bessie acknowledges that she is “Miss Wrong,” unfit to marry, and her plea reveals how her perception of herself matches that of the men. This further fixes her as fallen since it is not just Dick and Torpenhow who initially see her this way; she also recognizes that she is not “Miss Right.” Her appeal to Torpenhow alarms Dick and convinces him that he should separate the two before Torpenhow commits himself to her. After telling Torpenhow to leave town, an easy thing to do as a special correspondent, Dick reflects, “I said she was not immoral. I was wrong. She said she could cook. That showed premeditated sin. Oh, Binkie, if you are a man you will go to perdition; but if you are a woman, and you say that you can cook, you will go to a much worse place” (194). Dick assumes here that the sins of women are greater than the sins of men.

From his perspective, Bessie's attempt to persuade Torpenhow into a relationship shows her to be worthy of punishment since she is not a victim of seduction but a seductress herself. Dick's solution is for Torpenhow to leave, to take advantage of his position and get out of the way.

Torpenhow's imperial position allows for him to escape the temptations of this fallen woman and any attachment to her; the empire, then, becomes a realm of opportunity and escape. In *David Copperfield*, the fallen woman finds opportunity and escape by leaving England. Dickens situates Em'ly as a victim of the cruel Steerforth, and Kipling positions Torpenhow similarly—he needs his friends to step in and remove him from the clutches of a disastrous relationship. Of course the difference between these two narratives and the power positions of men and women is that Torpenhow has the ability to return to England and pick up his life again as if nothing happened. This is not the case for the women—their exits are final.

Dick begins to view Bessie as a stand-in for Maisie at their first meeting, and he begins to meld them together in his Melancholia. Looking at her sharply, he tells Torpenhow, “They are superb eyes for my business. And, after all, every head depends on the eyes. This has been sent from heaven to make up for—what was taken away....Evidently sent from heaven. Yes” (184). Dick recognizes that this woman will be useful for his work and that because of her lowly state, he can easily acquire her services. His interpretation of the fallen woman as sent from heaven is ironic and further illustrates how these women inspire competing narratives of mercy and punishment. Despite this gift from heaven to replace Maisie, Dick has a difficult time making progress on his piece until he goes to the doctor and discovers that he is going blind. This news horrifies Dick, and he calls it “the living death” (200). Just as he did when was upset by Maisie, he responds to this anxiety by remembering an event from experiences abroad.

A soldier had been nearly hacked in two by a broad-bladed Arab spear. For one instant the man felt no pain. Looking down, he saw that his life-blood was going from him. The stupid bewilderment on his face was so intensely comic that both Dick and Torpenhow, still panting and unstrung from a fight for life, had roared with laughter, in which the man seemed as if he would join but, as his lips parted in a sheepish grin, the agony of death came upon him, and he pitched grunting at their feet. Dick laughed again, remembering the horror. It seemed so exactly like his own case. (201)

Dick, like this mortally wounded soldier, sees his lifeblood leaving him; he will lose his sight and then his profession. His panic at this revelation pushes him to make a breakthrough with his painting as he decides that it will pull from the images of Bessie, Maisie, and this soldier bleeding out in the desert. He says, “I hold the notion now as clear as crystal,—‘the Melancholia that transcends all wit.’ There shall be Maisie in that head, because I shall never get Maisie; and Bess, of course, because she knows all about Melancholia, though she doesn’t know she knows; and there shall be some drawing in it, and it shall all end up with a laugh. That’s for myself” (204). Here Dick sets out his plan for the painting—a truly layered piece because it consolidates the New Woman, the fallen woman, and the man who laughs at it all. His act of artistic compression exerts control over his female subjects and places him as master of the piece—not only in his position as creator but also with his insertion of the soldier’s fateful laugh. Dick works obsessively on the painting, drunk most of the time since it seems to help him see better. While the alcohol seems to help Dick focus, it also likely numbs his senses to the lines dividing his subjects, helping him blend Maisie, Bessie, and him together. At the same time, his obsessive work and excessive drinking ultimately accelerates the decline of his sight suggesting

that his painting is ultimately a work of passionate suicide. Kipling later underscores this suicidal connection when Dick discovers that the painting has been destroyed, and he responds by carefully crafting his death on the colonial battlefield.

While readers may be sceptical that Dick can produce anything of artistic merit while in this confusing state of increasing blindness and drunken energy, Dick completes the painting and believes it to be his masterpiece; he has worked feverishly, to the detriment of his own health, to “rewrite *Hamlet*” and defeat Maisie. When he finishes the painting, Torpenhow offers his praise and his reading of the piece matches perfectly with Dick’s artistic vision and intentions, revealing that their imperial experiences and friendship have taught them to see with the same eyes: “‘Who taught you how to do it?...The touch and notion have nothing to do with your regular work. What a face it is! What eyes, and what insolence!’ Unconsciously he threw back his head and laughed with her. ‘She’s seen the game played out,—I don’t think she had a good time of it,—and now she doesn’t care’” (213). The two men see the painting as beautiful while Bessie thinks “it’s just the horriddest, beastliest thing” she has ever seen (214). One of Dick’s comments on the painting reveals how the painting embodies the male gaze. Torpenhow tells him, “She is a beauty. I can feel it.” Dick replies, “So will every man who has any sorrow of his own...He shall see his trouble there, and by the Lord Harry, just when he’s feeling properly sorry for himself he shall throw back his head and laugh—as she is laughing. I’ve put the life of my heart and the light of my eyes into her, and I don’t care what comes” (215). While the painting is modelled after a suffering woman (Bessie and Thomson’s *Melencolia*), the piece, according to Dick, is for suffering men. Thus, he has captured a condensed vision of female suffering into a piece that will appeal to men and speak to their experiences rather than to women’s, and this is why Dick feels triumphant. He has exerted control over the uncontrollable—artistic mastery

over a woman, Maisie, who he cannot bend to his desire. He has blended her with the image of a fallen woman, much more malleable, easy to be bought, and has laughed at the combination.

Dick's sense of triumph disappears, however, when he finds out that Bessie destroyed the painting, scrubbing and scraping out the Melancolia's face in a vengeful act meant to punish Dick for separating her from Torpenhow and for making fun of her. Having gone completely blind after finishing the painting, Dick did not know for some time that his beloved work was destroyed. He even showed the painting, not knowing its condition, to Maisie when she came to see him and refused to settle down and care for him. All that Maisie sees is a blurred mess rather than the tightly constructed, layered piece that Dick intended, and she flees from him, seemingly uncontrollable until the end. Dick's knowledge of the painting's destruction wrecks him. The painting had given him a sense of control over the uncontrollable. Its consolidated vision of these women and the horrors of battle was a comforting piece of containment and triumph. Even when he had lost the ability to see the Melancolia, Dick's awareness of its presence and what he was able to capture within it gave him a sense of security despite his decrepit state. In Booth's text, we see him compare England to Africa in order to give his audience a sense of control and feasibility; if savage Africans can be tamed and civilized, then surely the plight of the London poor can be improved. In Kipling's novel, we see a man attempt to condense what seems impossible, a woman who refuses him and the horrors of the battlefield, onto one canvas. Through great skill and feeling, he succeeds and finds comfort until he discovers its destruction.

Losing this painting is a loss of control as Dick no longer has proof that these elements can coexist as a beautiful work of art. The fallen woman's destruction of the piece pushes Dick to try and reassert some sort of control over his life, and he does this ironically by leaving England and ensuring his own death. He goes to great lengths to travel as a blind man to the

Sudan where he can re-enter the homosocial space of the colonial frontlines and where he can locate Torpenhow. On the ship leaving England, Dick feels the “rattle of the engines,” smells “the reek of oil and paint,” and says, “Oh, it’s good to be alive again!” (310). Despite the danger of this journey, Dick finds it enlivening. While on the train, moving closer to the frontlines, “There was indiscriminate firing at the rear of the train, and return fire from the darkness without and unlimited howling. Dick stretched himself on the floor, wild with delight at the sounds and the smells” (327). Even though Dick cannot see, the setting is familiar and comforting to him, and this imperial space offers him a winning position, just as he could bet large in Port Said, he can bet large in the Sudan; he can end his “living death” and die far away from Maisie, the woman who refuses him, and Bessie, the woman who destroys his greatest work. Indeed, Dick’s violent death, shot down off of a camel and into Torpenhow’s arms, is his last triumph. As the narrator says, “His luck had held to the last, even to the crowning mercy of a kindly bullet through his head” (339). Dick’s return to the frontlines again underscores how fallen women instigate or legitimize men’s active engagement in the imperial mission. Although Dick loses his vision and his life because of violence on the frontlines, he has escaped the women who threatened him and his work in England.

While Kipling’s novel does not equate the colony and the capital in the same way that Booth’s text does, *The Light that Failed* does support a similar imperial ideology that advocates for the empire as a site of opportunity and control. Booth argues that the imperial model of the civilizing mission can have profound positive effects in London, and Kipling’s novel reveals how a man destroyed by illness and left unsatisfied in his female relationships can reassert control in the colony and assure his own fate. In both texts, then, the empire is reliable. It offers scenarios and experiences that help explain and solve domestic problems—even if that solution

is an escape. I began this chapter outlining the ways that imperial ideology became more established and condensed at the end of the nineteenth century. In these two texts by Booth and Kipling, we see how categorizations of deviant behavior, particularly female behavior, played a key role in that process and how the collapsing of boundaries between the fallen woman and the negress and the fallen woman and the New Woman helped to place these women under a broader imperial vision in which men, or the “patriarchal family” of Booth’s scheme, could retain control.

6 CONCLUSION

I began this project interested in two topics: panic and power. More specifically, I was interested in what causes large numbers of people to panic about a particular issue, and I was interested in the ways that individuals and nations come to understand themselves as deserving of power. Reading Victorian novels, I found a figure who consistently incited panic and who enjoyed very little power: the fallen woman. As I began to think more deeply about this figure, I searched for explanations of her ostracization and was consistently dissatisfied with the notion that her expulsion from polite society was purely because of an elevated sense of sexual morals during the Victorian period. While conservative, middle-class ethics did play a key role in the fallen woman’s demise, it did not seem to me then, nor does it now, that the perceived need for tight control over female sexuality would produce such concern over the fallen woman’s body. I wondered if there might be other factors at work that might explain why this figure became a stock character in Victorian literature.

I began to notice that in many narratives of fallenness, the woman’s powerlessness contrasted starkly with that of her nation. While the British Empire was well established at the end of the eighteenth century, it expanded dramatically during the nineteenth and grew to

become the most powerful entity on the planet. This growth, as I have discussed, did not have a uniform pattern; the empire expanded in different ways in different areas, but, as Philippa Levine writes, the empire was always “about making money, it was about visible forms of power and it was about the high moral ground” (*The British Empire* 94). In this dissertation, I have focused on Empire’s power and morality, highlighting moments in fiction, poetry, and prose when the fallen woman becomes targeted in the maintenance of that power and sense of moral purpose.

In this study of fallen women and the British Empire, I have made three overarching claims. First, as I discussed above, I have argued that the fallen woman’s prevalence in Victorian literature and culture goes beyond the prudish sexual ethics of the Victorian middle class, and I have claimed that nineteenth-century sexual ethics were frequently entangled with notions of British power. In *Desire and Domestic Fiction: A Political History of the Novel*, Nancy Armstrong claims that “the history of the novel cannot be understood apart from the history of sexuality” (9). This dissertation shows, in part, how the histories of the novel and sexuality also cannot be understood apart from the history of imperialism. Second, I have presented a model for understanding this connection between fallen women and empire, asserting that deviant female sexuality, patriarchy, and empire exist in a triangulated relationship in which patriarchal and imperial institutions and ideologies bolster each other when threatened by sexually deviant women. Third, I have argued that the depiction and punishment of fallen women in multiple genres reveal an interest in protecting and maintaining an imperial system that claimed moral superiority over the people it colonized.

Because the classification and regulation of fallen women allowed the community to feel as if it had cleansed itself of harmful agents, these women played a key role in how the British cultivated an identity of superiority over sexually deviant (most often just different) native

populations in their colonies. Successful constructions of power require not only demonstrations of authority through force but also through the dissemination and naturalization of ideology—principally the sense that a group has a natural right to rule over another. Historians of the British Empire, of course, know how much work it took to maintain that idea of natural superiority. It required systems of segregation, education, and violence. There were many ways Britons situated themselves as worthy to rule, and I have argued that one way they contrasted themselves with their native subjects was by delineating between their sexual practices. If Kikuyu men in Kenya, for example, were sexually deviant because they had many wives, British men were normative because they had one to whom they were loyal. The success of the empire did not depend upon the veracity of these claims; rather, it depended upon whether enough people believed them to be true and took them for granted (Hall and Rose 2). As I showed in my analysis of the Contagious Diseases Acts, the British claim to moral superiority could be inherently flawed and deeply ironic, but it could still have the power to subjugate certain citizens. George Orwell would later describe how the idea of British supremacy was worn by imperialists like a mask, carefully crafted and crucial to maintain. He writes that the imperialist becomes a sort of hollow, posing dummy, the conventionalized figure of a sahib. For it is the condition of his rule that he shall spend his life in trying to impress “the natives,” and so in every crisis he has got to do what the “natives” expect of him. He wears a mask and his face grows to fit it....A sahib has got to act like a sahib; he has got to appear resolute, to know his own mind and do definite things....And my whole life, every white man’s life in the East, was one long struggle not to be laughed at. (4)

The imperialist, in Orwell's view, must learn to embody "the conventionalized figure of a sahib," a man who is seen as fit to rule and who acts decisively and who exists above mockery. In the Victorian period, the conventionalized figure of the imperialist was a rational man who acted justly and with restraint. His wife epitomized this restraint through her purity while the fallen woman threatened this image through her deviance. Whether a seductress or a victim, she implicitly challenged this construction of British imperial masculinity because she revealed his weakness.

The claims I have made here are significant because they shed new light on a familiar figure, and my hope is that scholars of Victorian literature who are interested in gender and sexuality and in women's roles in imperialism will find my study valuable. Furthermore, I hope that this dissertation spurs closer examination of works that similarly position the fallen woman as Other. This study does not include analyses of every fallen woman text nor does it compare the treatment of fallen women in literature across various sites of imperial power. Future work in this area might perform close readings of Thomas Hardy's *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, Leo Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*, or Gustave Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*—some of the most famous works of fiction featuring a fallen woman, none of which I examine here. This study also leaves room for further work with Victorian poetry that depicts the fallen woman. I discussed a few poems in this dissertation, but I focused primarily on the novel and its role in cultural imperialism.

Working on this project for the past two years, I have been amazed time and again by the ways that imperial and patriarchal ideology live on and continue to fortify their power by inducing panic, by Othering particular groups, and by projecting their authority as natural and unquestionable. This is especially true in the United States where the notion of "American

exceptionalism” has ruled for decades and where the government consistently acts to police other nations while often refusing to admit its own role in human rights abuses (Ignatieff 1). Attempts to come to terms with a history of abuse, like 2014’s Senate Committee Study of the CIA’s Detention and Interrogation Program (popularly referred to as “The Torture Report”), become embroiled in political party warfare rather than in reform efforts or acts of restitution. The release of this report incited two responses from those who wished to uphold the ideals of American exceptionalism. Some responded by stirring public fear that there would be international backlash and possibly attacks because of the report’s findings and that Dianne Feinstein, who led the charge to release the report, would “have to live with the consequences” of its publication (Burr qtd. in Hulse). This kind of claim, which plays upon the fears of a war-weary public, is particularly effective at distracting citizens from disturbing truths about their government’s actions. It takes away, for instance, from the troubling fact that the CIA “leaked classified information to journalists, exaggerating the success of interrogation methods in an effort to gain public support” (Ashkenas et al.). Officials wishing to protect American credibility paired these fear tactics with rhetoric that neutralized these revelations in order to make them seem understandable and routine. In an interview on December 9, 2014, Former Deputy CIA Director John McLaughlin, for example, employed this kind of neutralizing language:

I think the report overemphasizes the degree to which there was something you would call brutality, to the extent that there were problems in the management of the program. They came very early in the program. You know, it’s important to realize here that we may have made a few terrorists uncomfortable for a short period of time in order to get information that we felt was essential to protecting the United States. (“Former Deputy”)

McLaughlin's assertion that the CIA "made a few terrorists uncomfortable for a short period of time" glosses over the revelation that the "CIA's interrogation techniques were more brutal and employed more extensively than the agency reported" (Ashkenas et al.). Furthermore, his claim that abuses were the result of management problems makes their existence seem more like mistakes that would arise within any corporation rather than acts of physical violence endorsed by the government. Perhaps the best example of this kind of neutralizing language resides in the usage of terms like "enhanced interrogation techniques" and "rectal rehydration" instead of torture and sexual assault.

While these statements about government interrogation methods might seem far removed from the pages of Victorian literature, the ships bearing fallen women to British colonies, and the lock hospitals holding quarantined prostitutes, they are descendants of an imperial system that consistently worked to legitimize its power and tactics through narratives that privileged men over women, colonizer over colonized, white over brown, pure over fallen and that similarly neutralized racist and sexist motivations through euphemisms and scare tactics. Hopefully, by continuing to evaluate the ways that power is produced and the ways that certain people are marginalized throughout history and its narratives, we can learn to recognize patterns of injustice and build networks of mutual prosperity and peace.

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